



Exams Contingency Plan 2017-8

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Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at the centre. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the 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 also confirms Crypt School is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, General Regulations for Approved Centres 2017-2018) that the centre has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence.

Possible causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (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*
- *exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions*
- *internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators*

Exam time

- *exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies*
- *required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration*

- *candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies*

Results and post-results

- *access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates*
- *the facilitation of the post-results services*

Centre actions

- Exam officer's line manager immediately appoint temporary exams officer and/ or allocate specific tasks to staff members. Current staff members have exam office experience and the former exams office now works as an invigilator. In the first instance they will be called upon
- A number of invigilators have experience of providing administrative support in the exams office and should be used to assist with data input around entries and assist with results and remark administration
- Line manager will contact all awarding bodies to explain the situation and ensure temporary exams officer has access to secure sites of the awarding bodies
- Contact details for all awarding bodies are stored in the exams phone
- IT manager will grant the temporary exams officer access to the exams folder on the intranet and provide them with exam rights on Progresso
- A hard copy and electronic version of the Exams Progresso manual will be available to work from
- Key dates and the tasks to be completed can be found on the awarding body websites and on the Exams Office website
- Lead Invigilator will be available to assist with the training and recruitment of new invigilators. An online training package will be used and then supplemented with centre specific detail by the lead invigilator
- Specific centre instructions containing confidential information is held in the exams office marked Contingency Plan in the secure store

2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

- *candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements*
- *centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010*
- *evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not 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 providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained*

Exam time

- *access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms*

Centre actions

- SLT member appointed to assume responsibilities of the SENCO
- Team Leader TAs to collate evidence of need to support normal way of working
- Team Leader TAs and EO to apply for access arrangements after consultation with SLT member responsible

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- *Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams 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*
- *Internal assessment marks not provided to candidates and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines*

Centre actions

- Deputy Head to ensure departmental continuity by requesting an alternative member of staff takes responsibility (with appropriate training and support) for the actions above

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams

Invigilator shortage on peak exam days

Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

Centre actions

- Those invigilators not working will be contacted to fill absences
- SLT, cover supervisors, teaching assistants and support staff may be used where none of the invigilation team are available. These staff will be briefed in line with JCQ regulations. Wherever possible they will work alongside a member of staff from the invigilation team
- Consideration will be given to using agency invigilators

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning

Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days

Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time

Centre actions

- Timetabling will be reviewed and priority given to exams. Classes will be moved
- Contact the relevant awarding body and identify if the examination can be sat at an alternative venue
- Contact possible alternative venues including the local church halls where exams have been held previously
- Contact candidates and parents to inform them of the issue and proposals
- Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

MIS failure at final entry deadline

MIS failure during exams preparation

MIS failure at results release time

Centre actions

- Any failure at these key points will require additional administrative support. Centre support staff or invigilators can provide this support.
- MIS failure entry deadline, entries will be made on the awarding bodies secure website entry system. Entries will be made in advance of the deadline so there will be time to complete the alternative process.
- MIS failure exams preparation, timetables can be accessed via awarding bodies sites and all other preparation such as seating plans can be completed with other software.
- MIS failure results, results will be downloaded directly from the awarding body websites.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions

- Follow existing emergency procedures
- Contact the awarding body to inform them of the situation
- Consider alternative venues after consulting with awarding bodies
- Inform parents and candidates soon as practically possible

- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements
- Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series

8. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

Centre closed interrupting the of normal teaching and learning

Centre actions

- centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this via email, letter and local media as appropriate
- Alternative methods of learning to be used
- Alternative site to be found by SLT
- Priority given to those candidates who will be facing exams shortly

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

Centre actions

- Contact the relevant awarding body and identify if the examination can be sat at an alternative venue
- Contact possible alternative venues including the local church halls where exams have been held previously
- Contact candidates and parents to inform them of the issue and proposals
- apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements
- offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series

10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations (including *centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency*)

Centre actions

- Contact candidates and parents to inform them of the issue and proposals
- open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible
- use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (eg share facilities with other centres or use other public buildings if possible–

- apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements
- offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible

11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

Centre actions

- communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers
- ensure electronic and copying facilities are available to receive, make and store papers under secure conditions
- ensure papers received in an alternative way are stored securely

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions

- Seek advice from awarding bodies and their normal collection agency regarding collection
- Wait for written approval from the awarding bodies before using any alternative arrangements
- Ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions

- Contact awarding organisations immediately
- Inform candidates and parents
- Where possible allow candidates to retake the assessment
- Gather appropriate evidence of candidates' achievement as defined by the awarding body and submit

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

Centre actions

- Contact awarding bodies about alternative options
- Download results and submit enquiries from exam bodies secure sites
- Make arrangements to access and distribute results at an alternative site
- Communicate alternative arrangements with candidates and parents

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

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>

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...

2. Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, the school or college should assume that any exam or timetabled assessment should take place if it is possible for it to do so. This may mean having to locate alternative premises.

If the exam or assessment cannot take place, or if a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency or other event outside the control of the school or college, you should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation.

2.1 The school or college should consider the following steps

Exam planning

1. Review your contingency plan well in advance of each exam series.
2. Ensure that copies of question papers are received and stored under secure conditions.

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 the school or college is able to open.
3. Identify whether the exam can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned.
5. Communicate with parents, carers and students regarding any changes to the exam timetable.
6. Advise students, where appropriate, to sit exams in the next available series.

After the exam

1. Consider whether students may be eligible for special consideration.
2. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
3. 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.

2.2 The awarding organisation should take the following steps

Exam planning

1. Establish, maintain and at all times comply with an up to date written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements that are in place with schools and colleges enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with its conditions of recognition.

In the event of disruption

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any negative effect, in relation to its qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of its centres responsible for delivering qualifications on its behalf.
3. Ensure that where an assessment is required to 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 a negative effect on students, standards or public confidence.

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.

2.3 When a student misses an exam or is disadvantaged by the disruption

If you feel that the performance of all or some of your students has been negatively affected by the disruption you should ask your awarding organisation about applying for special consideration. The decision about what special consideration is, or is not appropriate, is for awarding organisations to make. Their decisions might be different, for different qualifications and for different subjects. However, we encourage awarding organisations to adopt a consistent approach, including between learners, schools or colleges, and awarding organisations, when dealing with a number of similar cases.

[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*, sections 1 and 2

<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

Contingency planning

The qualifications 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.

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

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

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

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>

[JCQ guidance taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations*

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

General regulations for approved centres

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

Guidance on *alternative site* arrangements

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

Guidance on *transferred candidate* arrangements

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/entries>

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>