



SIR THOMAS RICH'S

External Examinations Contingency Policy

Date reviewed: February 2018

Responsibility: The School's Examinations Officer under the supervision of the Senior Management Team (SMT) draws up and implements the Exam Contingency Policy. The Governors' Curriculum and Evaluation Committee reviews the policy and monitors its implementation. This policy is reviewed annually.

This policy is part of the Examinations Suite of policies. The Examinations Suite of policies details the School's procedures relating to external examinations and the assessments related to these. For the School's general assessment policies, please refer to the Assessment Recording and Reporting Policy (school website: [About Us – Governors and Policies](#)).

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1. 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 scenarios contained in the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

"It is the responsibility of the head of centre to ensure that his/her centre... has in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of 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 examination contingency plan/examinations policy should also reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.)

[JCQ [General regulations for approved centres](#)5.3]

2. Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

a) 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

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
Planning			
Annual data collection not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered	EO routinely updates data in the year preceding the next exam cycle and even earlier where possible	No action needed. Current and the next exam cycle data listed in EO's office in top drawer, forwarded by e-mail to line manager & SM-Documents-Course codes	DD
Annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines	Essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines available from: 'Exams Office ' website(EO-key dates calendar; EO-exams newsletter); Exam Boards via updates, key dates notices, exam office support	Obtain information from: Exams Office (online); Exam Boards (direct/online); contact EO's in the other G7/Gloucester grammars	DD
Sufficient invigilators not recruited	Advertise in the early autumn locally via local magazines and in school newsletters	If necessary, use cover assistants, SMT, admin staff, exam invigilation recruitment agencies, teaching staff	DD/SK
Entries			
Awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries (which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff)	Deadlines: AQA - 20 th July preceding exam cycle; all other Boards - 10 th October of exam cycle.	Enter relevant numbers in year groups for appropriate qualifications, levels and Boards via Examinations Organiser using EO's data lists on qualifications and DD's data on numbers	DD
Candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessments	Deadline: all Boards and levels – 15 th February of exam cycle	In Examinations Organiser: set up Season, download and import relevant basedata from Boards, import awards and elements for each subject at each level, assign students to season, create exam numbers and UCIs, create marksheets, collect entries from staff, enter data from staff into marksheets, check entries are correct with staff and students, submit entries, confirm submission successful	DD ICT (A2C)

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
Board deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred	Deadline: all Boards and levels – 15 th February of exam cycle	Contact Boards and explain situation as early as possible	MSRM/DD
Pre-exams			
Invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams	Review <i>Instructions for Conducting Examinations</i> for changes, information for invigilators and 'Exams Office' (online) for resources for training invigilators. Also, bottom drawer of filing cabinet in EOs office for past resources	Train invigilators	DD
Exam timetabling, rooming allocation and invigilation schedules not prepared	To be done as soon as possible after making exam entries and before April	In Examinations Organiser run Clash Analysis. Use Seating Organiser to allocate rooms and resolve clashes. Produce final and individual timetables. Distribute individual timetables to students. Using final timetable, prepare invigilation schedules	DD SK
Candidates not briefed on exam timetables and Board information for candidates	See <i>Instructions for Conducting Examinations</i> and photocopy <i>Information for candidates</i> appendices. Also, bottom drawer of filing cabinet in EOs office for past internal information sheets	Distribute individual timetables, <i>ICE</i> and internal information for candidates to students.	DD
Exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions	This is malpractice	Place under secure conditions and inform the Headmaster who must report the circumstances to the relevant Boards	MSRM (with DD, HoDs)
Internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to Boards/external bodies/moderators	HoDs are responsible for submitting marks online and submitting samples	Ensure marks and samples are submitted	DD

Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
Exam time			
Exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies	This is malpractice	Inform Headmaster who must report the circumstances to the relevant Boards	MSRM
Required reports/requests not submitted to Boards during exam/assessment periods eg very late arrival of candidates, suspected malpractice, special consideration	This is malpractice. Requests for special consideration should be made within 7 days of a student's last exam in the exam series.	Inform Headmaster who must report the circumstances to the relevant Boards and submit the required reports/requests at the earliest opportunity.	MSRM
Candidates scripts not dispatched as required for marking to awarding bodies	Scripts must be dispatched on the day taken or next day if this is not possible	Inform Board and dispatch at the earliest opportunity.	DD
Results and post results			
Access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates	Results should be downloaded and candidate statements of results produced on Wednesday, the day before results can be released to students.	Data Manager/ICT to do this.	DD/ICT
The facilitation of the post-results services	JCQ <i>Post-Results Services</i> (P-R S) and individual Board 'post-result service' and 'fees' information should be downloaded on Wednesday, the day before results can be released to students, or earlier. Note: Candidate consent forms must be completed and signed by candidates for all enquiries about results. (Consent form template in <i>JCQ P-R S</i> booklet appendix.)	Staff to be available on a daily basis to ensure: priority enquiries about results and priority photocopies of scripts can be processed online via Board secure websites; and outcomes downloaded and made available to students from 'results day' until the start of term. Staff to be available on a daily basis to process other result enquiries until 20 th September, original script requests until 4 th October and check outcomes of all enquiries until 14 th November, or earlier if complete.	DD

b) 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

Assistant SENCo takes over these key tasks assisted by the EO as needed

Assistant SENCo, together with rest of SMT, discusses each task and assigns SMT member or other member of staff to tasks

c) 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 and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines

Centre actions

In the event of the HoD/subject staff being absent for an extended time the EO through forward planning and by working with the data manager and other staff where necessary will have sufficient information to make early/estimated entries on time. In the unlikely event this cannot be done the awarding body should be informed, early/estimated entries made as soon as possible and pre-release material downloaded from awarding body websites

In the event of the HoD/subject staff being absent for an extended time the EO through forward planning and by working with the data manager and other subject teachers where necessary will have sufficient information to make final entries before deadlines are reached. Amendments to entries can be made by the EO after the deadline if necessary

In the event of the HoD being absent for an extended time other staff in the department would ensure NEA tasks are set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled and internal assessment marks and candidates work are provided to meet Board submission deadlines, assisted as needed by the EO.

In the event of other staff of a department being absent the HoD would issue NEA tasks to their classes, mark candidates work, submit assessment marks and work to meet awarding body deadlines.

If submission deadlines are missed the EO will inform the awarding body and follow their advice

d) 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

Advertise to recruit invigilators in the early autumn locally via local magazines and school newsletters to minimise the risk of insufficient invigilators

If insufficient invigilators are recruited, or there is an invigilator shortage on peak exam days, train and use cover assistants, admin staff, and SMT to act as invigilators and/or contact exam invigilation recruitment agencies if necessary. Invite teaching staff to train as invigilators if there is still a shortage.

Contact the Awarding body for advice if the shortage cannot be rectified

SK to contact invigilators if they have not arrived 20 minutes before the scheduled exam time and to arrange a local replacement if needed. If a replacement invigilator is not possible use cover assistants, admin staff or SMT

e) 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 or insufficient rooms available on peak exam days

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

Centre actions

In the event of the EO being unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exam timetable planning or insufficient rooms available on peak exam days the EO discusses the situation with the Head of Centre who, if appropriate, considers the possibility of using other venues such as a local church hall, local community hall or local sports hall. If other venues are to be used JCQ Centre Inspection Service are informed using the JCQ *Alternative Site form* at least six weeks before the start of the examination series in accordance with *Instructions for Conducting Examinations (section 5.3)*

Contact relevant awarding bodies for advice and follow their instructions, eg share facilities with another centre, using other venues such as a local church hall, local community hall or local sports hall

f) Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

MIS system failure at final entry deadline

MIS system failure during exams preparation or at results release time

Centre actions

Make entries at least two weeks before the final entry deadline to avoid problems with MIS system failure at the final entry deadline.

In the event of a primary failure, MIS system can be made available on a laptop via a replica copy.

Should the school site be unavailable, the MIS system can be made available from a home computer.

g) 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

In the event of an emergency such as a fire or bomb alert follow the 'Emergency evacuation procedure' described in *Sir Thomas Rich's Emergency evacuation policy (exams)*.

In the event of a centre lockdown follow the school 'Lockdown procedure' as described in the school's *Emergency and Crisis plan*.

Report the circumstances and actions taken to the awarding body/bodies and apply for special consideration for the students involved.

h) 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

The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this. [Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 1]

Centre actions

Prioritise candidates who will be facing examinations shortly

Open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible

Use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding bodies (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public buildings if possible)

Arrange for work to be sent home, use of SharePoint (e.g. departmental PowerPoints and other links) textbooks and external tuition as appropriate

Advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series e.g. GCSE

Religious Studies short course

i) 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

The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue. [JCP scenario 2]

Centre actions

Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding bodies

Apply to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements i.e. have been fully prepared, have covered the whole course and have taken a minimum of 40% of the qualification assessments but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control
Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible

j) 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*)

A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible.[JCP scenario 5]

Centre actions

The Head of Centre takes advice, or follows instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the school is able to open

Contact the relevant awarding bodies and follow their instructions

Open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible

Use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding bodies (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public buildings if possible)

Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exams when planned

The EO applies to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements i.e. have been fully prepared, have covered the whole course and have taken a minimum of 40% of the qualification assessments

Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible

Communicate with parents, carers and students regarding any changes to the exam timetable

k) 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

The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCP scenario 3]

Centre actions

In the event of a wrong set of examination papers being delivered to the centre they should be stored under secure conditions and the EO should contact the awarding body to inform them of the problem

In the event that a set of examination papers are missing from a delivery the EO should contact the awarding body immediately to inform them of the problem

In the event that a set of papers has not been received two working days before the examination date the EO must contact the awarding body to arrange alternative delivery of the papers by courier or electronically

In the event that papers are sent electronically the EO must ensure copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions

l) Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

The centre to communicate with the collection agency/relevant awarding organisations to resolve the issue. [JCP scenario 4]

Centre actions

The EO ensures secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

The EO contacts Parcelforce Examinations helpline (0344 561 7998) to report a failed collection and ensure scripts will be collected the next day

The EO seeks advice from the awarding body regarding collection if the scripts cannot be collected the next day

m) 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

It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers. [JCP scenario 6]

Centre actions

The Head of Centre communicates this immediately to the relevant awarding bodies and subsequently to students and their parents or carers

The EO applies to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements i.e. have been fully prepared, have covered the whole course and have taken a minimum of 40% of the qualification assessments

Candidates retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window, if possible

n) 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

Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. [JCP scenario 11]

Centre actions

The centre makes arrangements to access results at an alternative site via awarding bodies secure websites

The centre shares facilities with another school or college, if possible

Prioritise candidates going through UCAS

Causes h-n – all scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

3. Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

a) 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: yellow label service*
- *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>

b) Ofqual

- *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

c) **JCQ**

- *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>
- *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>

Contingency planning

The qualifications regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed a Joint contingency plan for the examinations system in case of wide scale disruption as a result of a flu pandemic, adverse weather conditions or other event.

The joint contingency plan is designed to 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.

The Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland may be downloaded from the Ofqual website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-englandwales-and-northern-ireland>

[Taken directly from JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations*

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