



**SHIRELAND**  
COLLEGIATE ACADEMY  
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# EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN

## 2025/26

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
T Reade and J Kaur	
Date of next review	March 2027

## Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	<b>Thomas Daly</b>
Exams officer line manager (Senior leader)	<b>Tony Reade</b>
Exams officer	<b>Mohammed Salloo</b>
ALS lead/SENCo	<b>Lucy Prince</b>
Senior leader(s)	<b>Tony Reade and Jagroop Kaur Gill</b>
E TECH Manager	<b>N Bains</b>
Data Manager	<b>M Oakes</b>

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## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at Shireland Collegiate Academy. 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 Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **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* and the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland-

This plan also confirms Shireland Collegiate Academy compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) 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. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

## Possible causes of 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*
- *confidential exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions*
- *internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators*

#### *Exam time*

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

#### *Results and post-results*

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption (Exam Officer is M Salloo, Data Manager is M Oakes, SENCO is Lucy Prince, ETEC Manager is N Bains, Assistant Head Teacher is J Kaur and other Senior Staff involved with Exams is T Reade and Head of Centre Thomas Daly.

- Planning
- Exams Officer undertakes the data collection exercise at the beginning of the Autumn term and sets a clear deadline for completion of this task along with chasing any subject areas that fail to provide feedback
- Key deadlines within the exams cycle are included in the Academy calendar which is produced in the Summer term of the previous academic year as well as being identified on the HODs workload calendar document
- Exams Officer regularly attends HOD meetings to update and discuss current issues within the Examinations cycle
- Exams Officer send out letters to currently employed invigilators at the beginning of the academic year in order to identify whether further recruitment needs to take place
- Exams Officer liaises with the HR department to advertise and recruit throughout the second half of the Autumn term, well in advance of the summer season
- Recruitment continues until such times as the Exams Officer is confident that there are enough invigilators employed

#### Entries

- Early calendaring of data collection exercise and checking by Exams Officer provides information for early entry requests from awarding bodies
- Exams Officer to use data collection document to download base data well in advance of awarding body deadlines for entries
- Exams Officer to produce entry lists for staff which checked by the HODs to ensure the correct candidates are being entered for the correct qualifications
- Exams Officer also uses the HODs Teams site to notify HODs that lists have been given out in order to prompt any HOD who may not have received the lists they were expecting
- Entry lists are returned to Exams Officer who enters the information into the Academy MIS
- Updated entry lists are returned to the HODs for double checking and once this has been done the entries are made vis A2C
- Exams Officer starts the entries process well in advance of the awarding body's deadlines and ensure that they provide reasonable deadlines for the HODs to adhere to, and follows up if any of the deadlines are missed

#### Pre-Exams

- Training and updating of invigilators is arranged and delivered by the Exams Officer, it is scheduled in the Spring term once all recruitment had taken place
- All invigilators must attend training and are allocated any session until they have attended the face-to face training as well as completing The Exams Office online training modules
- Once the entries have been sent to the awarding bodies the Exams Team will start finalising the organisation of the season – completing seating plans, booking invigilators, etc.
- Candidates are signposted to the JCQ information for candidates documents which are uploaded to the Student Portal at the beginning of the academic year – this is done through announcements on the Gateway and through Heads of Year and form tutors
- The Exams Officer also attends an assembly lead by the Senior teacher with the relevant year group prior to a exam season to recap the expectations and brief the students about any changes to the arrangements
- Process in place for delivery/downloading and storage of confidential materials within the Exams Office
- When confidential materials are shared with staff there is a process for logging and re-iteration to staff regarding the security of these materials
- Exams Officer offers the opportunity to all staff to store exam materials securely in the Exams Office if necessary
- Exams Officer to share awarding body deadlines for internal assessment submission deadlines with

HoDs and they communicate with their departments as well as advising the Exams Officer of progress towards deadlines

#### Exam Time

- Invigilation of examinations only undertaken by trained invigilators of the Exams Team
- During training all invigilators to be made aware of importance of recording events on the Exam Room Incident Log, signing every record, and highlighting to the Exams Team at the end of the examination any incidents, in particular those which may require awarding body intervention
- Time allocated to the Exams Team to ensure that the scripts are packed as soon as possible after the examination and are available for collection by Parcel Force at the pre-arranged time
- If the scripts are not collected or are not ready to be despatched by the pre-arranged time then they are placed back into secure storage until the next collection

#### Results and post results

- Plan put in place before the Summer holidays regarding the staff that are going to be available to support the release of the examination results, the Exams Team and Data Manager to be present on the day who all know how to access the results through A2C and the Academy MIS
- E-Tech team to be on site during the release of the results to deal with any technical difficulties experienced whilst accessing the results
- Clear internal process and timescale for making applications for post-results services shared with key members of staff prior to the Summer holidays through the policy published in the Academy gateway and information sharing at HoDs meeting
- Exams Officer available on results days to discuss post results requests with candidates

## **2. ALS lead/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 (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained*

#### *Exam time*

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

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

- Planning
- Meeting between SENCo and Exams Officer in Autumn term to review current access arrangements and put a plan in place for the assessment of students in Year 10
- All documentation to be held in candidate's e-folders which are accessible to Exams Officer as well as SENCo
- Exams Officer to be copied into all e-mail communication between the SENCo and assessor so that Exams Officer is aware of what stage different applications are at
- SENCo will not complete part 1 of Form 8 until evidence of need has been collected as it will inform the detail within this section

#### Pre-Exams

- SENCo and Exams Officer to meet termly to review current accessing arrangements including applications for modified materials, reflecting any feedback from internal examinations where appropriate
- Exams Officer to organise training for all facilitators of access arrangements alongside the invigilator training
- Training to include members of the Inclusion Team who could be called upon to act as facilitators if there is a shortage in the exam season

#### Exam time

- Organisation for the exams season to include the allocation of a dedicated access arrangements room and booking of access arrangements facilitators well in advance

### **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*

*Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking*

*Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines*

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

- Departments to work collaboratively in terms of producing information for examination entries therefore no one person holds all the information thus not making staff absence a major issue
- Exam Officer's regular attendance at the HoDs meeting means that there are constant reminders about key deadlines and discussion of key issues with the examination cycle can be disseminated to entire departments
- Exam Officer to attend SLT meetings and ensure that SLT are aware of upcoming deadlines for when they have their weekly link meetings
- Exams Officer will disseminate information received from the awarding bodies to the relevant staff as appropriate
- Exams Officer to share with staff the Internal Appeals policy through publication on the Academy gateway so HODs understand the importance of candidates being informed of centre assessed marks within the specified time scale
- Departments to confirm with Exams Officer when internal assessment marks are submitted and liaise with Exams Officer to ensure candidates' work is sent to moderators with appropriate paperwork and using correct procedures
- Exam Officer will organise the despatch of candidates' work if necessary

### **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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Letter requesting invigilator availability sent in September so identify any shortfall in numbers for the academic year
- Exams Officer to liaise with HR so that recruitment can take place as necessary in the Autumn and Spring term
- Planning for peak days during an exam season takes priority and where a shortfall is identified the Exams Team will supplement the numbers and if there is still an issue the Exams Officer will discuss well in advance with the Head of Centre a strategy for securing appropriate staffing
- All invigilators are aware of the process to report absence or lateness and the day-to-day plan for invigilation builds in a contingency to allow for one invigilator absence in a session without leaving the examinations short of the necessary ratio of invigilators, use of the Exams Team to fill in as necessary

## 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Rooming of examinations to take place as soon as the entries are completed to allow enough time to deal with any issues that may arise
- Exams Officer to identify key rooms that are to be used consistently throughout the examination period e.g. Sports Hall and Immersive room
- Exams Officer/Senior Teacher to ask Academy Senior Information Manager to identify room changes as appropriate for the rooms being used and share this information with relevant teaching staff well in advance
- Academy has an arrangement with local sports centre to use their hall in the case of an emergency – booking to be made through the Finance department
- Alternatively, if necessary a move of venue to one of the other establishments within the Trust e.g. WBCA

## 6. Cyber-attack

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Exam Officer/Senior Teacher are advised to report any suspicious emails and perceived cyber security attacks immediately to the Central EdTech support team at Trust Support [trustsupport@shirelandcat.net](mailto:trustsupport@shirelandcat.net).

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

- Link to the security operations centre which has our Cyber Security Plan [Security Operations Centre - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

## 7. Failure of IT systems

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*MIS system failure at final entry deadline*

*MIS system failure during exams preparation*

*MIS system failure at results release time*

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

- Exams Officer to ensure entries are ready to submit before the awarding body deadline so any MIS system failures can be dealt with and not impact on entries
- If problem does arise, e-Tech team to be made aware of the issue immediately and prioritise working on this problem, report issue directly to e-Tech manager
- Exams Officer to contact the awarding bodies as soon as the issue is identified as having an impact on entries, examination sessions or results release
- Exams Officer, after liaising with the Head of Centre, will contact families using the text message system should the problem be identified as having a direct impact on the delivery of examinations or the release of results
- Exams Officer will liaise with Head of Centre regarding possibility of accessing results at another centre if necessary

## **8. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Invigilators to follow Emergency Evacuation procedure as appropriate
- Invigilators to follow the advice and guidance from senior staff should a lock down occur
- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies as necessary to inform them of incident and discuss possible implications
- Communication with families through the text message system should the incident be identified as having a direct impact on the delivery of the examinations

## **9. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period**

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

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

- Contact families regarding the impact the situation may have on the examination cycle and identify how the Academy plans to address this – communication to come from the Head of Centre
- Use of Student Portal to facilitate off-site learning, prioritising work for candidates who will be facing examinations the earliest
- Advice to candidates, where appropriate, on accessing examinations in the next cycle rather than the immediate one
- Exams Officer to contact the awarding bodies to make them aware of the situation and any impact it may have on the examinations process

## **10. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations - centre remains open**

### Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal*

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

- Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations e.g. hospital, home address
- Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series

- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidate

**11. Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period**  
(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible
- Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates
- Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible
- Agreement regarding neighbouring sports centre that we can use their sports hall for additional space at peak times as well as in case of an emergency – facilitated through the Finance department, alternatively move examination venue to another centre within the Trust e.g. WBCA

**12. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Team to monitor despatch and arrival of papers to ensure centre has received all necessary examination papers in advance of examinations
- Two members of staff to countersign checked despatch log
- Exams Officer to contact awarding body as soon as a discrepancy is identified and confirm how the necessary scripts will be received: by courier or electronically
- Exams Officer needs to ensure that copies are received or printed, and stored under secure conditions
- All additional media materials e.g. CDs, DVDs, to be spot checked as per the relevant awarding body regulations

**13. Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

*Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Team to ensure that collections are made each day as expected – administrative staff to be briefed as to whom to contact should a collection not be made as expected
- Exams Officer to contact Parcel Force and/or awarding body to check on arrangements for future collection
- Exams Team to place examination scripts back in secure storage as necessary

**14. 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*

*Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer to ensure Head of Centre is fully informed of the incident
- Exams Officer to contact the relevant awarding bodies to inform them of incident and identify how candidate marks might be generated using evidence available
- Head of Centre to communicate issue and action taken by awarding body and Academy to support candidates in achieving their qualification to families
- Advice given to candidates, as appropriate, to retake the assessment in the next examination period

**15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services**

(Including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Exams Officer to inform e-Tech team of dates that results are to be downloaded and distributed to candidates so there is suitable support on-site at these times
- Exams Officer to discuss with Head of Centre accessing results from a different centre, using the text message system to inform parents/candidates of change of venue
- Exams Officer to contact awarding bodies to see if there is an alternative way to access results, as appropriate
- Exams Officer to be available to facilitate any post results requests and contact the awarding body if there are any issues in making these application
  - Liaise with Trust schools e.g WBCA to help facilitate the distribution of results

## 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

##### Contingency planning

Awarding organisations are required to establish, maintain and comply with an up-to-date detailed written contingency plan, to mitigate any incident they have identified may occur. This includes having communication plans for external parties ([Ofqual General Condition of Recognition A6](#)). Schools and colleges should also be prepared for possible disruption to exams and assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

##### General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [handling strike action in schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [school organisation: 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 terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools in extremely bad weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [police guidance](#) from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats

##### 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

You may also wish to see the [JCQ's notice to centres on exam contingency plans](#) and [JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations](#) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

##### Steps you should take

###### 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.

###### In the event of disruption

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

###### After the exam

- 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.
- Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
- Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
- 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.

##### Steps the awarding organisation should take

## 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.

## In the event of disruption

- Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
- Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
- 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).
- Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
- Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

## 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.

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

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also [JCQ's guidance on special considerations](#)

## Wider communications

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales and [CCEA Regulation](#) 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.

## Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations or assessments

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education in 2022 to 2023 has returned to normal. Schools are open and examinations will go ahead in summer 2023.

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

In November 2022, Ofqual and the Department for Education issued [decisions following a consultation on the resilience of the qualifications sector](#) for specific examinations awarded in England in summer 2023. Ofqual has published [Guidance for schools, colleges and other exam centres on gathering evidence of student performance](#) for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications to support resilience in the exam system in England in 2023.

The Department for Education has updated its guidance on [handling strike action in schools](#) in England in light of the industrial action in 2023. The guidance recommends schools should prioritise the running of examinations and assessments on any strike days, and should review their contingency plans to make this happen. Schools, colleges and other exam centres should speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

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

(Ofqual guidance extract above 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**)

## JCQ

15.1 The qualification regulators, awarding bodies 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>

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

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

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

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency days' for examinations, summer 2023. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of 'contingency days' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2023, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the last contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.

Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of the contingency arrangements so that they may take them into account when making their plans for the summer. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course.

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

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

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations (Effective from 1 September 2022) [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/)

JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/)

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

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

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

Instructions for conducting examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations)

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

## GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings)

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service)

## Wales

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

Opening schools in extremely bad weather: guidance for schools [gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools](http://gov.wales/opening-schools-extremely-bad-weather-guidance-schools)

## Northern Ireland

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

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

## ProtectUK

[www.protectuk.police.uk](http://www.protectuk.police.uk)

## National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free [Web Check](#) and [Mail Check](#) services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the [NCSC website](#).

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review **National Cyber Security Centre advice** following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. [More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)
2. [Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement](#)
3. [Offline backups in an online world](#)
4. [Backing up your data](#)
5. [Practical resources to help improve your cyber security](#)
6. [Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it](#)
7. [School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)