Tuition Extra
Exam Contingency Plan
2026/27

Date of Approval: September 2026

Examinations Officer: Letitia Etherington

Signed: Ruth Minhall

Approved by: CEO and Head of Tuition Extra

Next review: September 2027

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations and reflects centre practice.

Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Ruth Minhall
Senior Leader	Helen Gardiner/Jamie Pickles
Exams officer	Letitia Etherington
SENDCo	Megan Lamb
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Emma Sedgwick
Head of Systems and Processes	Jean Paul Muller

Senior Designated Contacts (Summer Results Period)

In accordance with JCQ requirements, Tuition Extra will maintain senior designated contacts who are available throughout the summer holiday period to respond to urgent awarding body requests relating to results, malpractice, missing scripts, special consideration and post-results services.

Primary Senior Designated Contact: Ruth Minhall (Head of Centre)

Deputy Senior Designated Contact: Helen Gardiner

Exam Officer Contact: Letitia Etherington

These staff members will have access to awarding body systems, examination records, contact details and contingency documentation when the centre is closed.

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Purpose of the plan

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

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual **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 guidance **Preparing for disruption to examinations.**

This plan also confirms Tuition Extra's compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (GR 5.3) that:

- The centre has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually by a member of the senior leadership team and communicated within the centre… a contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery
- The centre's contingency planning must include succession arrangements for members of staff involved in examination and assessment administration

Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.31-36) Tuition Extra **must** have in place, and at all times comply with, an up to date written contingency plan.

The contingency plan **must** cover all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery. Senior leaders **must** have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to examination/assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates.

The plan must cover the following scenarios:

- the head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENDCo (or equivalent role), examinations officer or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle
- the potential impact of other events such as flooding, which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre's IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre **must** identify an alternative site if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address.

Tuition Extra formally reviews alternative venue arrangements each September. The Head of Centre will ensure that:

- alternative venues remain available during examination periods;
- venues meet JCQ requirements for accommodation and security;
- access arrangements candidates can be accommodated;
- examination materials can be securely transported and stored;

- venue contact details are reviewed annually.

Records of these checks will be retained with the examinations documentation.

Tuition Extra **must** have at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact) who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

Tuition Extra **must** ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically it is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up via the Cloud. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

Candidates and parents/carers will be informed annually that contingency examination sessions may be used by awarding bodies and candidates must remain available until the final contingency date of the examination season.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that Tuition Extra responds to the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue.

Head of centre/senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Where the Head of Centre is absent at a critical stage, the Deputy Head of Centre would assume their roles and responsibilities.

Industrial Action and Staffing Disruption

Where industrial action affects teaching staff, support staff, invigilators or transport services:

- examinations and assessments will be prioritised;
- alternative staffing arrangements will be implemented;
- additional invigilators will be deployed where available;
- awarding bodies will be consulted where disruption may affect candidates;
- parents, carers and candidates will be informed of revised arrangements.

The centre will follow current DfE, JCQ and awarding body guidance applicable at the time of the disruption.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exams manager extended absence at a critical stage of the exam 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

Head of Centre to appoint a member of administrative staff to take over responsibilities should the absence of the Exams Officer have potential to affect the meeting of a deadline or hire in an experienced Exams Officer to cover the tasks.

Planning:

- A template of examination courses is updated at the start of each academic year by the Head of Education and Group Education Partner and a final version saved centrally by the Exams Officer. The information contained in this document is:
  - Subject
  - Specification Number

- Awarding Body
- QAN code
- Unit codes

- An exams calendar is printed, shared with the SLT in charge of Exams, identifying key dates for external exams; internal exam details are then added to this.
- External invigilators on standby should the centre fall short on internally appointed invigilators.

Entries

- SLT have access to the awarding bodies' portals to be able to check the entries made for candidates.
- Tutors are informed ahead of deadlines when they will be expected to submit entries. Entries that are required to be made but are still late would be entered and the cost disseminated to the relevant party.

Pre-exams

- All invigilators will be trained in advance of exam periods; this may be by an external agency/trainer.
- The Head of Centre is the only other member of staff to have access keys to the secure storage and would be able to ensure that the documents are logged and securely stored.
- Tutors are informed ahead of deadlines when they will be expected and to submit controlled assessments.

Exam time

- All invigilators, staff and candidates will be made aware of the conditions required to undertake exams and assessments in advance.
- SLT would be informed and action necessary paperwork required for Very Late Arrivals, malpractice and special consideration.
- Invigilators will be trained in the packing and dispatch of scripts.

Results and Post-results

- Senior Leadership Team will have access to results. Envelopes will be prepared in advance of results day.

2. SENDCo extended absence at a critical stage of 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

In addition to the SENDCo, there are several Senior Leaders and a Deputy SENDCo who are trained and capable of stepping in.

Planning

- Tuition Extra has a SEND policy updated annually to ensure equality is maintained.
- The SEND department have a folder containing all required documents for Access Arrangements, tutors are required to inform the SENDCo of individuals' requirements for testing and procedures in class for Normal Way of Working.

Pre-Exams

- The Examinations Officer and SEND department implement the applications together to ensure all are required by the deadline.
- Shared documents are created so that all arrangements are accessible by all staff to ensure they are implemented.
- Any modified paper requirements that are late would be directed to the board and their support requested in ensuring the students' receive their adjusted papers.
- Access arrangements are assessed at the beginning of the academic year so that we can ensure sufficient numbers of staff are trained, to allow for any staff absences too.

Exam time

- The SEND department are given access to the exam information and of who is taking which exams. They are also informed which access arrangement rooms are being used for which students. Support is arranged in advance and staff have access to the Access Arrangement schedule.

3. Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of 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 (including controlled assessments and coursework) 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

- There are multiple checks throughout the year before the deadlines to ensure the entries are as up to date as possible, after this, subject tutors would be required to make the decisions on entries, which would be checked by the relevant senior leader.
- Any omissions to be referred to the Head of Centre.
- If NEA are required under the specification, the Examinations Officer would have been liaising with teaching staff regularly to ensure all elements of the specification are covered.
- SLT is responsible for ensuring the priority for teaching is the examination cohort and staff will be covered in good time, by trained professionals, in all circumstance.
- All dates are provided to tutors in advance of the deadline; all marks are required in advance to ensure they entered either by teachers or the exams officer before the Awarding Body deadlines.

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

Planning

- In the absence of internally employed invigilators, we train all staff to be invigilators. This means cover can be arranged at short notice, should there be lack of invigilators or last-minute absence.

Exam Time

- School staff are aware of regulations and maybe be asked to step in when required.

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

Planning

- The Examinations Officer works closely with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure appropriate rooms are available, if last minute changes are required these would be arranged with the SLT to ensure adequate replacement rooms are used.

- Rooms are booked in advance of the exams to ensure classrooms are cleared and ready for exams. Rooms should be arranged after the Awarding Body amendment deadlines.

Exam Time

- We have other spaces available for exam use if the need arises. We would in the event of an emergency be able to use a space at St Stephen's Infant School, Canterbury or Haven Nook School, Canterbury.
- In the event that these venues are unavailable we would hire an emergency alternative venue.

6. Cyber security

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where any incidents might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery, such as a cyber-attack

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Head of Centre to be informed.
- The Exams Officer has hard copies for timetabling and resources. Our network is regularly backed up meaning no loss of data over the medium term.
- The Examinations Officer has hard copies of contact details for invigilation staff as well as alternative contact means.
- The Examinations Officer and SENDCo have access to access arrangements and special consideration paperwork printed on file.
- The Examinations Officer can remote access the exam website and manually upload exam results from home.
- Insurers immediately informed of a debilitating cyber-attack who will advise and instruct on required actions.
- Media can be remote downloaded using tethered hotspots onto third party devices for use in exams.
- Where students are unable to access their devices for word processing, alternative devices would be sought. If this is impossible, students would handwrite their answers, and special considerations would be automatically applied for from the exam boards.
- With respect to (GR 3.38) Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:

  a) ensuring that all members of centre staff who access awarding bodies' online systems undertake annual cyber security training…

  The training **must** include:

  - the importance of creating strong, unique passwords for all accounts;
  - keeping all account details strictly confidential;
  - the critical role of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) in protecting against unauthorised access;
  - how to properly set up and use MFA for both centre and awarding bodies' systems;
  - an awareness of all types of social engineering/phishing attempts;…
  - the importance of staff quickly reporting any suspicious activity, events, incidents and encouraging a safe and supportive reporting culture.

  A record of completed cyber security training must be held on file for inspection. This record could take the form of a certificate, a paper checklist, a spreadsheet-based checklist or a Learning Management System (LMS) report.

b) developing and maintaining a comprehensive cyber security policy for the centre. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provides resources to assist centres in creating such policies;
c) implementing and enforcing robust security measures, including:
    - where available, MFA must be used for all accounts and systems containing exam-related information, including those that interface between awarding body and centre systems, to enhance security and protect sensitive data. Where MFA is not available on the centre's systems, an equivalent multi-layered security approach must be in place. For example, strong log-in controls, access and monitoring controls and secure storage so that exam-related data is protected in line with cyber security best practice.
    - regularly reviewing and updating security settings to align with current best practices;
d) updating any passwords that may have been exposed
e) setting up secure account recovery options
f) reviewing and managing connected applications
g) monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
h) ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document *Guidance for centres on cyber security*
Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' MFA requirements.
reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems **immediately** to the relevant awarding body

The centre's Cyber Security Policy should be read alongside this contingency plan.

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

IT system corruption affecting candidates' work

MIS system failure at final entry deadline

MIS system failure during exams preparation

Technical failure or power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen examination

MIS system failure at results release time

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Head of Centre to be informed
- Our network is hosted and backed up daily, so essentially should not fail and is accessible through different devices.
- All awarding body details are available as well as printed mark sheet copies.
- Entries can we entered through portals and any issues directed to the Awarding Body for advice if required.
- During exams mark sheets are printed and could be used to make manual seating plans / emailed to exam boards to make entries if required.

- Using the awarding body details, we would contact them to request emailed results or use portals to retrieve result data.
- (GR 3.36) Ensure where candidates' work is produced electronically it is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up via the Cloud.
- Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

Where examination data is unavailable due to system failure:

- paper-based examination records will be used;
- awarding body portals will be accessed from alternative devices if necessary;
- manual seating plans and attendance registers will be produced;
- examination entries and amendments will be processed directly with awarding bodies where required.
- All candidate examination information is backed up separately from the main network infrastructure.

8. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) 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

In the event of a centre lockdown, Tuition Extra will follow its Lockdown Procedure and any instructions issued by emergency services. Candidates will remain under continuous supervision and the integrity of the examination will be maintained in accordance with JCQ requirements.

In an emergency such as a fire alarm or a bomb alert, the invigilator must take the following action:

- stop the candidates from writing;
- collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all candidates are present) and evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority;
- advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room. Candidates must be advised to close their answer booklet;
- ensure the candidates leave the room in silence;
- ensure candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room so that there is no discussion about the examination;
- make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted;
- allow the candidates the remainder of the working time set for the examination once it resumes;
- if there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the examination;
- make a full report of the incident and of the action taken and send to the relevant awarding body.

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
• Head of Centre responsible for finding alternative venues/methods of learning. • Priority given to exam cohort • Examinations Officer to contact awarding bodies for advice regarding special consideration • Parents/Carers and candidates to be informed.

10. Candidates to take examinations - centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan
Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal because of a crisis.
Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption
• Inform parents/carers and candidates of the situation causing candidates to be unable to attend to take their examinations. • Arrange an alternative venue / advise on next opportunity to sit examination(s) • Consider moving the starting time of the examination for all candidates (see section 6 of the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*) • Be aware of the rules for very late arrivals (see section 21 of the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*) • Wherever possible, it is always in the best interest for candidates to sit the examination. However, special consideration is an option where a candidate is unable to sit the examination (see Chapter 4 of the JCQ document *A guide to the special consideration process*) • The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required

11. Centre may not be able 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 may not be able to open as normal for scheduled examinations
Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption
• Open for candidates only if possible. • The decision on whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies. • Special consideration is an option if all other avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the published criteria

- The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required
- Use alternative venue – St Stephen's Infant School or Haven Nook School in agreement with awarding body
- Offer candidates the opportunity to take the exams in the next exam series.
- Prior to each summer examination series, candidates and parents/carers will be informed that awarding bodies may use contingency examination sessions and therefore candidates should remain available until the final designated contingency date published for that examination series.

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

- Awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. We would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and have plans in place to facilitate such an action.
- Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances.
- As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date

13. Delay in collection arrangements for 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

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, centres should contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions.
- for any examinations where we make our own arrangements for transportation, we will investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ document Instructions for Conducting Examinations.
- We will ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until as close to the collection time as possible - ensuring script packages are not left unattended at the collection area .

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

- Awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations
- Where marks cannot be generated by awarding organisations candidates may need to retake affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.
- The Head of Centre is responsible for immediately informing the awarding organisation(s) and subsequently the candidates and their parents/carers.
- Candidates offered the opportunity to retake in subsequent series.

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

- Distribution of results:
  - Centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
  - Centre to make arrangements to coordinate access to post-results services from an alternative site Centre to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation.)
- (Facilitation of post-results services:
  - Centre to make arrangements to make post-results requests at an alternative location
  - Centre to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post-results requests are not possible)
- Head of Centre to inform transition schools, students and parents about delay as soon as possible.
- Use of our alternative centres, St Stephen's Infant School or Haven Nook School as a location to distribute results.

Related Policies and Procedures

This contingency plan should be read alongside:

- Examinations Policy
- Access Arrangements Policy
- SEND Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Cyber Security Policy
- Business Continuity Plan
- Lockdown Procedure
- Emergency Evacuation Procedure
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

All policies are reviewed in accordance with Tuition Extra's policy review schedule.

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

Cyber security: core standard

Ofqual

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

This document was updated in October 2023 to include Ofqual's final decisions on long-term resilience arrangements, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC),

In addition to this guidance, you will need to be aware of your specific responsibilities for local and national school preparations and contingencies. You should also follow advice from relevant public health bodies.

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.

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 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 your 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.

Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

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 students, parents and carers any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

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 to the relevant awarding organisation 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.

Steps the awarding organisation should take

Exam planning

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. 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

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 are able to 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.

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, depending on their specific policies.

See also JCQ's guidance on special consideration

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 DfE 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

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 September 2023, Ofqual and the DfE published joint consultation decisions on long-term resilience arrangements. As in 2023, Ofqual has provided guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications. For VTQs

and other qualifications used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will provide guidance where needed and will contact schools and colleges with more information.

In December 2022, Qualifications Wales published guidance for contingency assessment arrangements for GCSEs, AS and A levels and Skills Challenge Certificates in the event that a national decision is made to cancel exams. This guidance is still relevant for the current academic year.

The DfE 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 must speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

The DfE has also issued guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in their buildings. It includes the need for contingencies for possible disruption to examinations and links to the existing emergency planning guidance.

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

General contingency guidance

- emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings from the DfE in England
- handling strike action in schools from the DfE in England
- school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools from the DfE in England
- reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete: guidance for education settings with confirmed RAAC from the DfE in England
- exceptional closure days: Northern Ireland 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, childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings- guidance for schools and education settings from the Welsh Government
- protective security and preparedness for education settings from the DfE
- police guidance from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats
- cyber security guidance for schools and colleges from the National Cyber Security Centre

(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** (last updated 7 May 2024) 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

Instructions for conducting examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/instructions-for-conducting-examinations-ice/ (with particular reference to section 15, **Contingency planning**)

Preparing for disruption to examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

General Regulations for Approved Centres www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms/

Guidance notes for transferred candidates www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms/

A guide to the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-reasonable-adjustments/

Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023; Revised July 2025) www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

5 tips to get exam ready and stay cyber safe! www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/

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

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Contingency planning www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

Wales

School closures: examinations www.gov.wales/school-closures-examinations

Opening schools as well as childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather: www.gov.wales/opening-schools-well-childcare-and-play-settings-extreme-bad-weather-and-extreme-hot-weather

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days – Northern Ireland www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/exceptional-closure-days
Checklist - exceptional closure of schools www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/checklist-exceptional-closure-schools

National Cyber Security Centre

Cyber Security for Schools www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools

Cyber security training for school staff www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools