

Examinations Contingency Plan 2024/25

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Ms Niamh Boyle	
Date of next review	30/03/2026

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1. Key Staff involved in Contingency Planning

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Mrs Madeleine Moran
Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Exams	Mr Brian Finnegan
Exams Officer	Ms Niamh Boyle
SENCo	Miss Jade O'Connell
Head of Sixth Form	Mr Narell Dannie
Deputy SENCo, Access Arrangements Administrator	Miss Stephanie Lehane

2. Purpose of the plan

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

This plan also confirms St. Gregory's Catholics Science College's compliance with JCQ's General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3) that the centre has in place.

The Examination Contingency Plan 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 outlines the procedures to be undertaken in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency

The plan will be implemented in the event of major disruption to the system, such as widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather or power failures. Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example the police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency and will be coordinated, as appropriate, with the Department for Education and qualification regulators Ofqual.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by:

- 2.1 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".
- 2.2 The **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the JCQ notice **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (effective from 11 October 2021).

Risk Factor 1: Exam Officer Extended Absence at key points in the examination Cycle			
	Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
Management	The overall management and coordination of the Examinations process especially meeting Key Deadlines are unknown to other staff members.	All procedures to be documented. Support material is available in the Key Tasks section of the Exams Office, the Exams Office section on the JCQ website and Exam Boards.	Examinations Officer
	Lack of suitable expertise to undertake all the tasks involved in managing examinations.	Alternatively, the Exams Officer of another school can be requested to provide assistance. The SLT should nominate a "Deputy" to cover a role or task. Consideration could be given to Work Shadowing.	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations
Planning	Annual Plan which Identifies all Courses and Qualifications not produced.	Teachers to inform Coordinator of the Exam Boards and Awards regarding 2025 exams.	Heads of Department, Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations
	Annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines.	Utilise previous Exams Plan as a Template and update. Deputy Head in Charge of Examinations.	Deputy Head in Charge of Examinations
	Students with Special needs not identified.	Identify students in the Inclusion List on T drive. Produce annual Exams Concessions List.	SENCo
Entries	Awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff.	Heads of Department to be asked to identify any Pre-Release material which may be required for their subject.	Assistant Head in charge of Assessment
	Candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment.	Consult SIMS guidance and liaise with HoDs and make entries via the centre's MIS. Notify the Awarding Bodies of the Exams Officer's absence, so that additional support can be provided.	Assistant Head in charge of Assessment

	Awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred.	Ensure that all staff involved in exams, in particular HoDs, have been made aware of the deadline and of the importance of sticking to the deadline.	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations
Pre-Exams	Exam timetables, rooming allocation and invigilation schedules not prepared.	Consult SIMS guidance to generate Candidate Examination Timetables.	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations
	Candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates.	Brief candidates on Examinations processes and Awarding Body regulations.	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations
	Exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions.	Secondary Key Holder will store exam/assessment materials in the Secure Exams room.	Data Manager
	Internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators.	Consult with Exam Boards seeking guidance regarding submission of marks and samples of work to Moderators.	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations HODs
Invigilation	Sufficient invigilators not recruited.	Confirm existing Invigilators, advertise for more and use agency staff to fill gaps.	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations Cover Manager
	Invigilator Schedule not constructed.	Utilise the Exams Timetable to work out how many Invigilators are required and in which locations.	Cover Manager
	Invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions in ICE.	Invigilators to train and certificate using The Exams Office training package.	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations
Exam Time	Exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies.	Refer to the ICE booklet and relevant Centre Exams Policies to ensure that the integrity of exams is not compromised.	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations
	Required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration.	Refer to Exam Boards in order to establish the correct procedure for submitting reports/requests.	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations
	Candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies.	Parcelforce must be contacted to arrange for the collection of	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations

		completed scripts in advance of exams.	
Results	Access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates.	Access A2C and Exam Board websites to download results. Access SIMS to produce Results Reports for candidates.	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations
	Analysis of Results for Performance Reporting.	Access SIMS Results Analysis and download to Excel and 4Matrix for analysis.	Assistant Head in charge of Assessment
Post-Results	The facilitation of the post-results services.	Access Exam Board websites Post-Results Services.	Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Examinations

Risk Factor 2: SENCo Extended Absence at Key Points in the Examination Cycle

	Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
Planning	Candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements.	Identify candidates who might benefit from Access Arrangements.	Deputy Head in charge of Examinations Deputy SENCo, Access Arrangement Administrator
	Centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.	Identified staff will work together to ensure that disabled candidates are given the necessary support under terms of the Act.	Deputy Head in charge of Examinations Deputy SENCo, Access Arrangement Administrator
	Evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated.	Gather evidence of need to support normal way of working and keep in the Access Arrangements folder.	Deputy Head in charge of Examinations Deputy SENCo, Access Arrangement Administrator
Pre - Exams	Approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body.	Apply for Access Arrangements liaising with the SEND team as necessary.	Deputy SENCo, Access Arrangement Administrator Examinations Officer

	Centre-delegated arrangements not put in place.	Ensure Centre-delegated arrangements are in place.	Examinations Office Deputy Head in charge of Examinations Teachers
	Modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline.	Inform Examinations Officer of requirements for Modified papers in time for the external deadline.	Deputy SENCo, Access Arrangement Administrator Examinations Officer
	Staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained.	Ensure that trained staff are allocated to provide support for Access Arrangement candidates.	Deputy Head in charge of Examinations Deputy SENCo, Access Arrangement Administrator
Exam Time	Access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms.	Lead the SEND team in ensuring that support has been put in place.	Examinations Officer Deputy SENCo, Access Arrangement Administrator

Risk Factor 3: Teaching Staff Extended Absence

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time resulting in pre-release information not being received.	Ensure that staff are made aware of deadlines including HODs and second in line to gather the necessary data.	Examinations Officer HODS/Second in Department
Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered	SLT and HODS to support departments where teachers are absent at key points.	SLT HODS

late/late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies.		
Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled.	Centre to bring in additional teaching staff to support departments in managing NEAs.	SLT
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.	Exam Boards to be notified if it looks unlikely that deadlines will be met.	Examinations Officer
Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines.	Exam Boards to be notified if it looks unlikely that deadlines will be met.	Examinations Officer

Risk Factor 4: Lack of appropriately trained Invigilators or Invigilator Absence

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
Failure to recruit sufficient Invigilators to conduct Examinations.	Invoke recruitment campaign in order to employ more than the minimum required by JCQ regulations.	Deputy Head in Charge of Examinations
Failure to train Invigilators to conduct examinations in accordance with JCQ regulations.	All Invigilators to undertake online training and certifications using The Exams Office platform.	Examinations Officer
Invigilator shortage on Peak Examination days.	Operational staff will be trained as Invigilators and will fill in if the number required falls below the threshold.	Deputy Head in Charge of Examinations
Invigilator absence on the day of the examination.	Call on Agency staff to fill any short - term gaps.	Cover Manager

Risk Factor 5: Lack of Appropriate Rooms or Main Venues unavailable at short notice

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
Examinations Officer unable to locate sufficient or appropriate rooms during Examinations.	Liaise with the SLT member responsible for Cover. If necessary, move timetabled classes to free rooms for examinations use.	Examinations Officer Deputy Head in Charge of Examinations Cover Manager

Insufficient rooms available on Peak Exam days.	Identify suitable areas to use within the Centre such as Sixth Form rooms or the Small Gym.	Examinations Officer Deputy Head in Charge of Examinations Cover Manager
Main Exam Venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at Exam Time.	Locate accommodation outside of the Centre: St. Bernadette's. Margaret Clitherow. Our Lady of Grace Junior. Our Lady of Grace Infant's.	Examinations Officer Deputy Head in Charge of Examinations

Risk Factor 6: Failure of IT Systems

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
MIS System failure at Final Entry deadline.	Notify Exam Boards, the IT Support team and Beebug. Emphasise the urgent need for the MIS to be restored.	Examinations Officer IT Support
MIS System failure during exams preparation.	Exams Officer to work with IT Support to store required data securely in an alternative location and continue with exams preparation.	Examinations Officer IT Support
MIS System failure at Results Release Time.	Access results for the Awarding Bodies extranet to develop necessary reports and Results documents.	Examinations Officer

Risk Factor 7: Emergency Evacuation of the Exam Room (or Centre Lockdown)

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
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	All staff involved with the examinations process must be familiar with the Examinations Emergency Evacuation Plan and the Examinations Lockdown Policy and act accordingly. Awarding bodies must be notified of the disruption.	Examinations Officer Invigilators SLT

Risk Factor 8: Centre Closed for an Extended Period

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting	Organise temporary venues to continue to provide teaching and study support using contacts within the Borough.	Head of Centre Deputy Head in Charge of Examinations IT Support

<p>the provision of normal teaching and learning</p>	<p>Consideration to be given to leverage the use of online teaching. Head of Centre to follow government advice in the event of a pandemic. If it is not possible for assessments to go ahead, then students' grades will instead be determined by their teachers, using a teacher assessed grade (TAG) approach.</p>	
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Risk Factor 9: Candidates at risk of being unable to take Examinations – Centre Open

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
<p>Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal.</p>	<p>Special Consideration to be applied for, if appropriate, from the relevant Exam Boards. Candidate to be made aware of this option and that evidence may need to be gathered to support the application for an Award.</p>	<p>Examinations Officer</p>

Risk Factor 10: Centre unable to open as normal during the examination period

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
<p>Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.</p>	<p>Organise temporary venues: St. Bernadette's. Margaret Clitherow. Our Lady of Grace Junior. Our Lady of Grace Infant's. Candidates will be notified of changes to the examination venues. Disruption must be kept to a minimum. Awarding Bodies must be informed regarding the disruption and security risk that may occur and advice sought. It may be necessary to apply for Special Consideration.</p>	<p>Head of Centre Examinations Officer</p>

Risk Factor 11: Disruption in the distribution of examination papers.

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
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<p>Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations.</p>	<p>There must be records of the quantity of each examination paper required and the times they are due to arrive.</p> <p>Use Awarding Body extranets to monitor this.</p> <p>If examination papers have not arrived by the expected time, Awarding Bodies must be notified who may provide the missing papers by electronic download.</p> <p>As a last resort, Awarding organisations to consider rescheduling of the examination.</p>	<p>Examinations Officer</p>
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Risk Factor 12: Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts.

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
<p>Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence.</p>	<p>Where examinations are part of the National Yellow Label service, contact the relevant Awarding Bodies for advice and instructions.</p> <p>For examinations which are not part of the National Yellow Label service, centres should seek the advice of the relevant Exam Board and investigate possible alternative dispatch options.</p> <p>Ensure that the completed scripts are stored securely until collection.</p>	<p>Examinations Officer</p>

Risk Factor 13: Assessment evidence not available to be marked

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked	Awarding Bodies must be notified as soon as possible and advice sought. It may be necessary to apply for Special Consideration.	Examinations Officer
Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations	Awarding Bodies to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on evidence of candidate achievement. Where marks cannot be generated, candidates may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent examination series.	Examinations Officer

Risk Factor 14: Centre unable to distribute Results as normal or manage Post Results.

Risk	Mitigation	Coordination
Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services. Including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency.	Contact the Awarding Bodies and proceed accordingly. Make arrangements to access results at an alternative site in agreement with the Exam Boards. Also to make the same arrangements regarding Post Results services.	Head of Centre Examinations Officer

Appendix 1 - Ofqual Guidance to Inform Procedures and Implement Contingency Planning

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

Contingency planning

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

Covid specific guidance

When drafting contingency plans, you should consider the following guidance:

- actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak from the Department for Education in England
- actions for FE colleges and providers during the coronavirus outbreak from the Department for Education in England
- [responsibility for exams](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [vocational, technical and other general qualifications in 2022](#) from Ofqual (regulator)
- [GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in 2022](#) from Ofqual (regulator)
- [education and childcare: coronavirus](#) from Welsh Government
- [Qualifications Wales homepage](#) from Qualifications Wales (regulator)
- [coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for school and educational settings in Northern Ireland](#) from Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(information from CCEA\)](#) – information on vocational, technical and general qualifications from CCEA Regulation

General contingency guidance

- emergency planning and response 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
- [bomb threats](#) procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office

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

See also the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

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

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

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 should continue in 2021 to 2022 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2021 and summer 2022.

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 exam timetables.

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** (updated 30 September 2021) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>)

Appendix 2 – JCQ Guidance to Inform Procedures and Implement Contingency Planning

- 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/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

- 15.2 In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.
- 15.3 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.
- 15.4 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.
- 15.5 The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' for examinations, summer 2022. 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 a 'contingency day' 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 2022, 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 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 this contingency arrangement so that they may take it 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.

This Notice is based on guidance provided within the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan, which is available from the JCQ website: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/jcq-joint-contingency-plan

In the event of widespread disruption to the examination system, all centres **must** have contingency plans in place. There are three main categories of disruption, which are outlined below.

Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations – centres remain open

Centres' contingency plans should focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations. As part of these preparations, centres should take into account the guidance provided in the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

- consider moving the starting times of the examination for all candidates (see **section 6.2** of the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations)
- being aware of the rules for very late arrivals (see **section 21** of the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations).

Wherever possible, it is always in the best interest for candidates to sit the examination. However, if candidates who are unable to sit the examination meet the criteria, special consideration through absence for acceptable reasons is an option (see **Chapter 4** of the JCQ publication A guide to the special consideration process: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>)

Please do not hesitate to call the relevant awarding body if you require additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations.

Centres at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period

As above, centres' contingency plans must focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations if the centre is at risk of being unable to open as normal.

The responsibility for deciding 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.

Information on what centres should do if examinations or other assessments are seriously disrupted can be found in the three country regulators' exam system contingency plan:

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

Special consideration through absence for acceptable reasons is also available as an option if all other avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the relevant criteria.

Please do not hesitate to call the relevant awarding body if you require additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to your examinations.

Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts:

- 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 examinations where centres make their own collection arrangements, they should **investigate alternative options** that comply with the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations
- completed scripts **must** be stored securely until they are collected.

Summary of centre and awarding body responsibilities

Examination centres are responsible for:

- preparing plans for any disruption to examinations as part of centres' general emergency planning
- deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding bodies if the centre is unable to open
- exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding bodies
- judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration because of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding bodies
- assessing their circumstances and liaising with awarding bodies in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers.

Awarding bodies are responsible for:

- ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations
- advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining/approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements
- evaluating and declining/approving requests for special consideration.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2021-2022 <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

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from the notice - **Preparing for disruption to examinations** effective from 11 October 2021 www.jcq.org.uk/preparing-for-disruption-to-examinations/)

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

Instructions for Conducting Examinations 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

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption; Coronavirus (COVID-19) www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools

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>

6. Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Other criteria:

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

What should we do if we are subjected to a cyber-attack?

If subject to a cyber-attack, centres should:

- Enact your incident management plan
- Report to the NCSC: <https://report.ncsc.gov.uk/>
- Contact your local law enforcement and Action Fraud: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>
- Inform the DfE by emailing: sector.securityenquiries@education.gov.uk

Online exams have many things to offer. Especially the level of flexibility and ease they add to the learning and assessment process is remarkable. Educators and students appreciate that they feel empowered to deliver their respective tasks. However, it does pose some serious risks as well. As the assessment or exam process removes the invigilators' physical presence, things may become hard to manage. How to protect online proctored exams from internet threats? This is a question everyone is asking.

Let us discuss some significant factors affecting cyber security for online proctored exams.

- Data and System Risk

Some students are reluctant to trust online proctoring software, and their worry is not baseless. Anyone should question every software or application before giving access to their system. Especially in today's time when malware attacks are on the rise, system protection should be a priority. Hence, it is vital to use and allow a proctoring solution that has a robust mechanism against malware and complies with all major security regulations.

- User Privacy

Bad players in the market are always seeking opportunities to steal user data and use it for their selfish benefits. In such a situation, students will feel apprehensive about granting access to outside software and applications to enter into their personal digital space. However, this reluctance does not help the process of online remote proctoring to carry out online exams. That is why institutes should only use proctoring partners with the utmost respect for user privacy and operate within the regulations like SOPIPA (Student Online Personal Information Protection Act) and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

- Virtual Machines and Stealth App Detection

search icon

Cyber risks for an online exam include cyber threats from sneaky stealth Apps and virtual machines. The proctoring solutions must constantly up their game against these digital dangers to protect exam integrity. The best form of protection is prevention. Hence, online proctoring solutions should continuously evolve their technology to fight efficiently against these malicious applications that affect the credibility of exams.

Methods and tools to handle Cyber Security for Online Proctoring Solutions

- Access Control Devices and Methods

Exams with online proctoring solutions should have end-to-end security in place. The best use of access control devices is helpful to ensure the stakeholders' identification, authentication, and authorization at various stages of the examination.

- AI and Machine Learning

AI and machine learning can be put to use for online proctoring by defining suspicious user behaviour. Every problematic move and action during an examination process can be flagged efficiently and brought to the notice of the invigilators. This method is made possible through the online proctoring solution's AI and machine learning capabilities.

- Biometrics

A critical and helpful method to invade the risk of imposters and related malpractices during exams is using biometric measures to authenticate the identity of the person taking the test. Facial recognition and, in some advanced cases, thumb impressions can be used.

- Regulatory Compliance

Online proctoring solutions must comply with all the essential regulations in major world regions. Such compliance assures the students that their data and information are safe during the online proctored exams.

- Video and audio monitoring

Video surveillance does make a significant difference. If the students know they are under monitoring, their assessment conduct will differ. Audio and video monitoring can reduce the risk of cyber misconduct to a great extent.

About Proctortrack and Its Contribution to Safeguard Online Exams

The world's most advanced proctoring solution leverages automation and live proctoring using AI to deliver innovation, quality, and price leadership at scale.

"The number of students admitting to cheating has exponentially increased over the past five years, and cyber security risks are challenging. Our goal is to provide the right tools to institutions for conducting fair and secure in-classroom and remote exams. Proctortrack is the world's most advanced and easiest in-classroom and remote proctoring solution that allows educational institutions to conduct online exams effortlessly without worrying over the risks of cheating and cyber security." Rahul Siddharth, COO/Co-Founder of Verificent Technologies.

External infrastructure vulnerability assessment

Security

The scanning and analysis of vulnerabilities in internet-facing IT systems

Security

Our team uses the tools that attackers use during the early stages of some attacks

Internal infrastructure vulnerability assessment

Security

The scanning and analysis of vulnerabilities in internal networks and systems, such as servers, desktops, laptops and tablets

Security

Our team uses the tools that attackers use, when inside your network, to discover devices that are susceptible to further exploits

Penetration Testing

shield-alert

What is a penetration test?

This is a comprehensive level of technical assurance for testing systems and processes as agreed between the school and the Secure Schools Offensive Security team.

list-status

How do we conduct the test?

The offensive security team uses the same tools, tactics, techniques and procedures that attackers use to identify and confirm your school or trust's cyber security strengths and weaknesses.

key-alert

How does the test help schools?

Commissioning a penetration test helps your school to tackle real cyber security risks before attackers get there first.

Appendix 3 – Contacting the Awarding Bodies

AQA

0800 197 7162

eos@aqa.org.uk

OCR

01223 553998

support@ocr.org.uk

Pearson

0344 463 2535

examsofficers@pearson.com

WJEC

02920 265 077

exams@wjec.co.uk

NCFE

0191 239 8000

customersupport@ncfe.org.uk