

EXAMINATION POLICY

Non Sibi Sed Aliis

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Psalm 119, vs 105

"But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." **Jeremiah 17:7-8**

This policy document and the content contained therein remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school. No amendments can be made without their express instructions and they remain the final arbiters in any matters relating to it.

Review Date: Spring Term 2022

Next Review Date: Autumn Term 2022

Reviewed By: Mr A Holland

APPROVED BY THE HEADTEACHER – Spring Term 2022

Examination Policy

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Examination Policy Introduction

The Governors and staff are committed to the principle of entering every student for relevant external examinations, who has shown reasonable effort throughout the course and has completed his or her coursework to a satisfactory standard.

Our aim is to provide the greatest opportunities for students to achieve their maximum potential. Therefore, wherever possible students should be entered at GCSE level or Nationally Accredited and Recognised certification for each subject they have studied providing they have satisfied the exam boards requirements on coursework, and fulfilled the criteria stated above, and that there is no medical reason to prevent this.

It is recognised that there are varying needs and abilities of children. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to reduce the number of subject entries, or to re-direct entry to non-GCSE examinations. In this case the number of entries will be decided by the Senior Leadership Team on the advice of the subject Curriculum Leader and the Learning Support Manager. All non-entries will be co-ordinated by SLT.

All students will take accredited examinations in the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities (Geography or History). The majority of other students will take accredited examinations in two other subjects, one of which will be a MFL subject for the most able students in this subject. Most students will take a Design and Technology subject unless taking separate Sciences.

The purpose of this exam policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of candidates
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exam system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in Balshaw's exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

This exam policy will be reviewed by the Assistant Headteacher (Data, Tracking & Assessment) and brought to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team, Examinations Officer and the Governors.

1 - Exam responsibilities

Headteacher

Head of centre responsibilities

The 'head of centre' is always compliant with the published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements to ensure the security and integrity of the examinations/assessments.

The head of centre may not appoint themselves as the examinations officer. A head of centre and an examinations officer are two distinct and separate roles. ([GR, section 2](#))

The **head of centre** is the individual who is accountable to the awarding bodies for ensuring that the centre is always compliant with the published JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements to ensure the security and integrity of the examinations/assessments. **It is the responsibility of the head of centre to ensure that all staff comply with the instructions in this booklet.** Failure to do so may constitute malpractice as defined in the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures, 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022*:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice> (ICE Introduction)

Head of centre

- Understands the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including:
 - [General Regulations for Approved Centres \(GR\)](#)
 - [Instructions for Conducting Examinations \(ICE\)](#)
 - [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments \(AA\)](#)
 - [Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures \(SM\)](#)
 - [Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments \(NEA\) \(and the instructions for conducting coursework\)](#)
 - [A guide to the special consideration process \(SC\)](#)
- Ensures the centre has appropriate accommodation to support the size of the cohorts being taught including appropriate accommodation for candidates requiring access arrangements for exams and assessments

National Centre Number Register

- Takes responsibility for confirming, on an annual basis, that they are both aware of and adhering to the latest version of the JCQ's regulations. This confirmation is managed as part of the National Centre Number Register (NCNR) annual update
- Understands that this responsibility cannot be delegated to a member of the senior leadership team or the examinations officer, and acknowledges that failure to respond to the NCNR annual update, and/or the head of centre's declaration, will result in:
 - the centre status being suspended
 - the centre not being able to submit examination entries
 - the centre not receiving or being able to access question papersand ultimately, awarding bodies could withdraw their approval of the centre

Recruitment, selection and training of staff

- Retains a workforce of an appropriate size and competence, including sufficient managerial and other resource, to undertake the delivery of the qualification as required by an awarding body. This includes taking reasonable steps to ensure occupational competence where this is required for the assessment of specific qualifications

- Provides fully qualified teachers to mark non-examination assessments, and/or fully qualified assessors for the verification of centre-assessed components
- Enables the relevant senior leader(s), the examinations officer (EO) and the ALS lead/SENCo to receive appropriate training and support in order to facilitate the effective delivery of examinations and assessments within the centre, and ensure compliance with the published JCQ regulations
- Appoints an ALS lead/SENCo who will determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities

Internal governance arrangements

- Has in place a written escalation process should the head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team with oversight of examination administration, be absent
- Has in place a member of the senior leadership team who will provide support and guidance to the examinations officer and ensure that the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout an examination series
- Ensures centre staff undertake key tasks within the exams process and meet internal deadlines set by the EO
- Makes sure that a teacher, a tutor or a senior member of centre staff who teaches the subject being examined, is not an invigilator during an examination
 - Has in place a member of the senior leadership team who will provide support and guidance to the examinations officer and ensure that the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout an examination series
 - Ensures centre staff undertake key tasks within the exams process and meet internal deadlines set by the EO
 - Makes sure that a teacher, a tutor or a senior member of centre staff who teaches the subject being examined, is not an invigilator during the examination

Delivery of qualifications

- Delivers qualifications, as required by the awarding body, in accordance with relevant equality legislation. This includes but is not limited to ensuring that qualifications are made available to all candidates capable of undertaking them and seeking reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates
- Enables candidates to receive sufficient and up to date laboratory experience, or relevant training where required by the subject concerned
- Where/if using a third party to deliver any part of a qualification at the centre:
 - maintains oversight of, and responsibility for, the delivery of the qualification in accordance with JCQ regulations and awarding body requirements
 - has in place a written agreement with the third party ensuring that a copy of the written agreement is available for inspection if requested by the awarding body

Public liability

- Complies with local health and safety rules which are in place and that the centre is adequately covered for public liability claims

Security of assessment materials

- Takes all reasonable steps to maintain the integrity of the examinations/assessments, including the security of all assessment materials, by ensuring:
 - the location of the centre's secure storage facility in a secure room solely assigned to examinations for the purpose of administering secure examination materials
 - the secure room only contains exam-related material

- there are between two and six keyholders only, each of whom must fully understand their responsibilities as a key holder to the secure storage facility
- access to the secure room and secure storage facility is restricted to the authorised two to six keyholders and staff named and approved by the head of centre are accompanied by a keyholder at all times
- appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that confidential materials are only handed over to authorised members of centre staff
- the relevant awarding body is immediately informed if the security of question papers or confidential supporting instructions is put at risk
- that when it is permitted to remove question papers from secure storage, and to avoid potential breaches of security, arrangements are in place to carefully check and record that the correct question paper packets are opened
- Makes arrangements to receive, check and store question papers and examination material safely and securely at all times and for as long as required in accordance with the current JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations*
- Makes arrangements to receive and issue material received from the awarding bodies to staff and candidates, and notify them of any advice and instructions relevant to the examinations and assessments
- Allows candidates access to relevant pre-release materials on, or as soon as possible after, the date specified by the awarding bodies
- Through taking an ethical approach and working proactively to avoid malpractice among students and staff takes all reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of any malpractice/maladministration before, during the course of and after examinations have taken place
- Ensures any person involved in administering, teaching or completing examinations/assessments is advised that where malpractice is suspected, or alleged, personal data about them will be provided to the awarding body (or bodies) whose examinations/assessments are involved. Personal data about them may also be shared with other awarding bodies, the qualifications regulator or professional bodies in accordance with the JCQ publication *Suspected malpractice – Policies and procedures*
- Ensures irregularities are investigated and informs the awarding bodies of any cases of alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice or maladministration, involving a candidate or a member of staff, are reported to the awarding body immediately
- Ensures risks to the exam process are assessed and appropriate risk management processes/contingency plans are in place (that allow the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence)

Conflicts of interest

- Ensures the relevant awarding bodies are informed before the published deadline for entries for each examination series of any potential conflict of interest where
 - a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at the centre which includes internally assessed components/units (taking at the centre as a last resort where unable to find an alternative centre)
 - a candidate is being taught and prepared for a qualification which includes internally assessed components/units by a member of centre staff with close relationship to the candidate
- Maintains clear records that confirm the measures taken/protocols in place to mitigate any potential risk to the integrity of the qualifications affected by the above, and where
 - a member of exams office staff has a close relationship to a candidate being entered for exams and assessments at the centre or at another centre

- a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at the centre which does not include internally assessed components/units (taking at the centre as a last resort where unable to find an alternative centre)
 - a member of centre staff is taking a qualification at another centre
- Ensures other relevant centre staff where they may be involved in the receipt and dispatch of confidential exam materials are briefed on the requirements for maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the exam materials
 - Ensures members of centre staff do not forward emails and letters from awarding body or JCQ personnel without prior consent to third parties or upload such correspondence onto social media sites and applications
 - Ensures members of centre staff do **not** advise parents/candidates to contact awarding bodies/JCQ directly nor provide them with addresses/email addresses of awarding body examining/assessment personnel or JCQ personnel

Centre inspections

- Co-operates with the JCQ Centre Inspection Service, an awarding body or a regulatory authority when subject to an inspection, an investigation or an unannounced visit, and takes all reasonable steps to comply with all requests for information or documentation made by an awarding body or regulatory authority as soon as is practical
- Allows all venues used for examinations and assessments, paperwork and secure storage facilities to be open to inspection
- Understands the JCQ Centre Inspector will identify him/herself with a photo ID card and **must** be accompanied throughout his/her tour of the premises, including inspection of the centre's secure storage facility

Examinations Officer

Manages the administration of public and internal exams:

- Understands the contents of annually updated JCQ publications including:
 - [General Regulations for Approved Centres](#)
 - [Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#)
 - [Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures](#)
 - [Post-results services \(PRS\)](#)
 - [A guide to the special consideration process](#)
- Completes/submits the National Centre Number Register annual update (administered on behalf of the JCQ member awarding bodies by OCR <https://ocr.org.uk/administration/ncn-annual-update/>) by the end of October each year
- Is familiar with the contents of annually updated information from awarding bodies on administrative procedures, key tasks, key dates and deadlines
- Ensures key tasks are undertaken and key dates and deadlines met
- Recruits, trains and deploys a team of internal/external invigilators; appoints lead invigilators, as required and keeps a record of the content of training provided to invigilators for the required period
- Works with the SENCo to ensure invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates and those acting as a facilitator supporting access arrangement candidates fully understand the respective role and what is and what is not permissible in the exam room
- Supports the head of centre in ensuring that awarding bodies are informed (where required) of any conflict of interest declared by members of centre staff and in maintaining records that confirm the measures taken/protocols in place to mitigate any potential risk to the

integrity of the qualifications affected before the published deadline for entries for each examination series

- Briefs other relevant centre staff where they may be involved in the receipt and dispatch of confidential exam materials on the requirements for maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the exam materials
- advises the Senior Leadership Team, subject and class tutors and other relevant support staff on annual exam timetables and application procedures as set by the various exam boards
- oversees the production and distribution to staff, governors and candidates of an annual calendar for all exams in which candidates will be involved and communicates regularly with staff concerning imminent deadlines and events
- ensures that candidates and their parents are informed of and understand those aspects of the exam timetable that will affect the
- consults with teaching staff to ensure that necessary coursework is completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries
- receives, checks and stores securely all exam papers and completed scripts
- administers access arrangements and makes applications for special consideration using the *JCQ Access arrangements and special considerations regulations* and *Guidance relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations*
- identifies and manages exam timetable clashes
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all exam costs/charges
- line manages in organising the recruitment, training and monitoring of a team of exams invigilators responsible for the conduct of exams
- submits candidates' coursework marks, tracks despatch and stores returned coursework and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule
- arranges for dissemination of exam results and certificates to candidates and forwards, in consultation with the SLT, any appeals/re-mark requests
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their exams
- maintain examinations noticeboards for students and staff

SLT

- Are familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including:
 - General Regulations for Approved Centres
 - Instructions for Conducting Examinations
 - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments
 - Suspected Malpractice - Policies and Procedures
 - Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (and the instructions for conducting coursework)
 - A guide to the special consideration process
- Organisation of teaching and learning.
- External validation of courses followed at key stage 4.
- Ensures students enter and leave the exam hall in orderly manner
- Consults with Curriculum Leaders on decisions to change subject examboards/qualifications.
- Ensure teaching staff undertake key tasks, as detailed in this policy, within the exams process (exam cycle) and meet internal deadlines set by the EO and ALS lead/SENCo
- Ensure teaching staff keep themselves updated with awarding body subject and teacher-specific information to confirm effective delivery of qualifications
- Ensure teaching staff attend relevant awarding body training and update events

Senior Leader with responsibility for exams

- Analyse exam results for presentation the Governors, SLT and teaching staff
- Prepares candidates for exams through assemblies focussing on exam conduct
- Advises on remarks

Curriculum Leaders/Headteacher/SLT

- Guidance and pastoral oversight of candidates who are unsure about exam entries or amendments to entries.
- Involvement in post-results procedures.
- Accurate completion of Controlled Assignment mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- Accurate completion of entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the exams officer.
- Administration of Special Consideration applications.

Teachers

- Notification of access arrangements (as soon as possible after the start of the course).
- Submission of candidates' names to Curriculum Leaders/SLT
- Undertake key tasks, as detailed in this policy, within the exams process and meet internal deadlines set by the EO and ALS lead/SENCo
- Keep updated with awarding body subject and teacher-specific information to confirm effective delivery of qualifications
- Attend relevant awarding body training and update events

Learning Support department

- Administration of access arrangements.
- Identification and testing of candidates, requirements for access arrangements.
- Provision of additional support — with spelling, reading, mathematics, dyslexia or essential skills, hearing impairment, English for speakers of other languages, ICT equipment — to help candidates achieve their course aims.

External invigilators

- Attend/undertake training, update, briefing and review sessions as required
- Provide information as requested on their availability to invigilate
- Sign a confidentiality and security agreement and confirm whether they have any current maladministration/malpractice sanctions applied to them
- Collection of exam papers and other material from the exams office before the start of the exam
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the exam and their return to the exams office

Reception staff

- Support the EO in the receipt and dispatch of confidential exam materials and follow the requirements for maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the exam materials

Site staff

- Support the EO in relevant matters relating to exam rooms and resources

Candidates

- Confirmation and signing of entries.
- Understanding coursework regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework/Controlled Assessment/Non- Examination Assessments as their own.

Parents

- Punctuality of students to examinations
- Payment of fees if student fails to attend without a doctor's note.

2 - The statutory tests and qualifications offered

The statutory tests and qualifications offered at this school are decided by the Headteacher, SLT and the Curriculum Leaders.

The statutory tests and qualifications offered are CAT Tests, NGRT Tests, NGST Tests, GCSE, Cambridge Nationals, ELC, NVQ and BTEC.

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the school's published prospectus for that year. If there has been a change of syllabus from the previous year, the exams office and link SLT must be informed by the end of June each year.

Decisions on whether a candidate should not take an individual subject will be taken in consultation with the candidates, parents/carers, Learning Support manager, subject teachers, Head of House, Curriculum Leader and the Deputy Head.

At key stage 4

All candidates will be entitled, and enabled, to achieve an entry for qualifications from an external awarding body.

3 - Exam seasons and timetables

Exam seasons

Internal exams are scheduled in November and December (Yr 11-Trial GCSEs), January (Yr 9-Formal Assessments), and May (Yrs.7, 8 and 10-Formal Assessments).

External exams are scheduled in May and June (Yr 11 GCSEs).

All internal exams are held under external exam conditions.

Which exam series are used in the school is decided by the Headteacher, Curriculum Leaders, and the SLT.

Timetables

Once confirmed, the Exams Officer will circulate the exam timetables for internal exams and external exams.

4 - Entries, entry details and late entries

Entries

Candidates are selected for their exam entries by the Curriculum Leaders and the subject teachers. Candidates, or parents/carers, can request a subject entry, change of tier. The school does accept entries from external candidates.

Late entries

Entry deadlines are circulated to Curriculum Leaders via notice board. Late entries are authorised by the Curriculum Leaders and Exams Officer

5 - Exam fees

The school will pay all normal exam fees on behalf of candidates, unless a student fails to attend. Late entry or amendment fees are paid by departments. Candidates or departments will not be charged for changes of tier, withdrawals made by the proper procedures or alterations arising from administrative processes provided these are made within the time allowed by the awarding bodies.

6 - The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a several factors which will include, but are not limited to:*

- *the needs of the disabled candidate;*
- *the effectiveness of the adjustment;*
- *the cost of the adjustment; and*
- *the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.*

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- *involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;*
- *involves unreasonable timeframes; or*
- *affects the security and integrity of the assessment.*

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'."

[AA Definitions, page 7]

All exam centre staff must ensure that the access arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.

Special needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENDCo/Educational Psychologist / specialist teacher or medical professional.

The SENDCo will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam, and the date of that exam. The SENDCo can then inform individual staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the exam.

Access arrangements

Making special arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of the SEND/Learning Support department.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SEND/Learning Support department under the guidance of the Exams Officer.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SEND/Learning Support department with the Exams Officer.

“Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make ‘reasonable adjustments’.*

[AA Definitions, page 7]

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the Learning Support department with the Exams Officer.

Use of Word Processors

Will be determined by the SENDCo in line with the policy in place.

Also refer to Special Educational Needs and Disability Policies and Equality policy which can be found on the school website.

7 – Child Protection/safeguarding policy

Please refer to Safeguarding, Child Protection Policy on the website.

8 - Estimated grades

Estimated grades

The Curriculum Leaders will submit estimated grades to the Exams Officer when requested by the Exams Officer.

9 - Managing invigilators and exam days

Managing Invigilators

External Invigilators will be used for internal exams and external exams together with a lead teacher who has day-to-day knowledge of the students.

The recruitment of invigilators is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Checks (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the School Business Manager.

DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the school.

Invigilators are timetabled and briefed by the Exams Officer.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Exam days

Security of exam materials

Exams officer

- Confirms appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that confidential materials are only handed over to those authorised by the head of centre
- Ensures access to the secure room is restricted and staff named and approved by the head of centre are accompanied by a keyholder at all times. There must be between two and six keyholders only, each of whom must fully understand their responsibilities as a key holder to the secure storage facility
- Has a process in place to demonstrate the receipt, secure movement and secure storage of confidential exam materials within the centre
- Ensures a log is kept at the initial point of delivery recording confidential materials received and signed for by authorised staff within the centre and that appropriate arrangements are in place for confidential materials to be immediately transferred to the secure storage facility until they can be removed from the dispatch packaging and checked in the secure room before being returned to the secure storage facility in timetable order
- Ensures the secure storage facility contains only current and live confidential material (ensuring that past examination question papers, internal tests and mock examinations are not kept in the centre's secure storage facility)
- Ensures that examination stationery, e.g. answer booklets and formula booklets are stored in the secure room (attempting to store this material in the secure storage facility, when sufficient space allows)

Policies (E)

- Ensures the integrity and security of any electronic question paper is maintained during the downloading, printing and collating process (ensuring printing is carried out in an area that can be controlled to prevent unauthorised personnel accessing live assessment materials and ensuring only authorised members of centre staff have access to electronic question papers)

Reception staff

- Follow the process to log confidential materials delivered to/received by Balshaw's to the point materials are issued to authorised staff for transferal to the secure storage facility

Teaching staff

- Adhere to the process to record the secure movement of confidential materials taken from or returned to secure storage throughout the time the material is confidential

Timetabling and rooming

Exams officer

- Produces a master exam timetable for each exam series. Identifies and resolves candidate exam timetable clashes according to the regulations (only applying overnight supervision arrangements as a last resort, once all other options have been exhausted and according to Balshaw's policy.
- Identifies exam rooms and specialist equipment requirements
- Allocates invigilators to exam rooms (or where supervising candidates due to an exam timetable clash) according to required ratios
- Liaises with site staff to ensure exam rooms are set up according to JCQ and awarding body requirements
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates

SENDCo

- Liaises with the EO regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

Site staff

- Liaise with the EO to ensure exam rooms are set up according to JCQ and awarding body requirements

The Exams Officer will book all exam rooms after liaison with other users and make the question papers, other exam stationery and materials available for the invigilator.

The Exams Officer and site team are responsible for setting up the allocated rooms including the gym as the main exam room.

Conducting exams

Head of centre

- Ensures venues used for conducting exams meet the requirements of JCQ and awarding bodies

Policies (E)

Exams officer

- Ensures exams are conducted according to JCQ and awarding body instructions
- Uses an *exam day checklist* to ensure each exam session is fully prepared for, unplanned events can be dealt with and associated follow-up is completed

Dispatch of exam scripts

Exams officer

- Dispatches scripts as instructed by JCQ and awarding bodies
- Keeps appropriate records to track dispatch.

Exam papers and materials

Exams officer

- Organises exam question papers and associated confidential resources in date order in the secure storage facility.
- Attaches erratum notices received to relevant exam question paper packets.
- Collates attendance registers and examiner details in date order.
- Regularly checks mail or email inbox for updates from awarding bodies. In order to avoid potential breaches of security, ensures care is taken to ensure the correct question paper packets are opened by ensuring a member of centre staff, additional to the person removing the papers from secure storage, e.g. an invigilator, checks the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry, if appropriate, immediately before a question paper packet is opened
- Ensures this additional/second check is recorded
- Where allowed by the awarding body, only releases exam papers and materials to teaching departments for teaching and learning purposes after the published finishing time of the exam, or until any timetable clash candidates have completed the exam.

Exam rooms

Head of centre

- Ensures that internal tests, mock exams, revision or coaching sessions are not conducted in a room 'designated' as an exam room.
- Ensures that when a room is 'designated' as an exam room it is not used for any purpose other than conducting external exams.
- Ensures only approved centre staff who have not taught the subject being examined) are present in exam rooms to perform permitted tasks
- Ensures the centre's policy relating to food and drink that may be allowed in exam rooms is clearly communicated to candidates.
- Ensures the centre's policy on candidates leaving the exam room temporarily is clearly communicated to candidates.

Support and encouragement may be offered to students at any point up until the time the candidates enter the examination room. From that moment onwards they are under examination conditions and strict protocols must be adhered to.

Senior members of staff who have been approved by the head of centre can be present at the start of examinations. They must on entry of the exam room identify themselves to the senior invigilator and/or the Exam Officer. Senior members of staff who have the approval of the head of centre may:

- Assist with the identification of candidates;
- Deal with disciplinary matters;
- Check that candidates have been issued with the correct question paper for the day, date, time, subject, unit/component and tier of entry if appropriate
- Check that candidates have the appropriate equipment and materials for the examination;
- Start the exam off
- Check the exam paper for inaccuracies if requested to do so by the senior invigilator or Exams officer

Under no circumstances may a member of centre staff:

- be present at the start of the examination and then sit and read the examination question paper before leaving the examination room;
- enter the examination room with the intention of accessing the examination question paper;
- have access to the examination question paper unless this is specifically requested by either the exams officer or an invigilator. For example, a possible printing error has been identified and, in the absence of an erratum notice, the exams officer needs this verified by the relevant subject teacher before reporting the issue to the awarding body;
- give any indication of their opinion of a question paper to candidates, verbally or otherwise, having been asked to inspect the content;
- communicate with candidates, (except in timed Art tests or where maintaining discipline in the examination room). This constraint extends to coaching candidates, reminding candidates which section(s) of the question paper to answer or which questions they should answer;
- enter the examination room and approach candidates, either to prompt them to make an attempt at the examination or to provide support and encouragement;
- enter the examination room and read candidates' scripts

The JCQ notice *'The people present in the examination room'* provides further guidance on the role of centre staff in the examination room, other than the Exams Officer and invigilators.

A senior member of staff or the Exams Officer will start all exams in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

Subject staff may be present at the start of the exam to assist with identification of candidates but must not advise on which questions are to be attempted.

In practical exams subject teachers may be on hand in case of any technical difficulties.

Exam papers must not be read by subject teachers or removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Spare papers will be distributed to Curriculum Leaders at the end of the exam session.

A relevant subject teacher may be available to read out any subject-specific instructions and start the exam, if required.

Exams officer

- Ensures exam rooms are set up and conducted as required in the regulations.
- Provides invigilators with appropriate resources to effectively conduct exams.
- Briefs invigilators on exams to be conducted on a session by session basis (including the arrangements in place for any transferred candidates and access arrangement candidates).

- Ensures sole invigilators have an appropriate means of summoning assistance (phone in each room with roving invigilator).
- Ensures invigilators understand they must be vigilant and remain aware of incidents or emerging situations, looking out for malpractice or candidates who may be in distress, recording any incidents or issues on the exam room incident log.
- Ensures invigilators understand how to deal with candidates who may need to leave the exam room temporarily and how this should be recorded on the exam room incident log.
- Provides authorised exam materials which candidates are not expected to provide themselves.
- Ensures invigilators and candidates are aware of the emergency evacuation procedure.
- Ensures invigilators are aware of arrangements in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance if an exam room is evacuated.

Senior leaders

- Ensure a documented emergency evacuation procedure for exam rooms is in place.
- Ensure arrangements are in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance if an exam room is evacuated.

Invigilators

- Conduct exams in every exam room according to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations* and/or awarding body requirements and as instructed by the centre in training/update and briefing sessions.

In the event of an emergency such as a fire alarm or a bomb alert the following action must be adhered to:-

The decision to evacuate the examination room or rooms will be made by a member of the SLT unless there is imminent danger to staff and students.

If the decision has been made to evacuate the following steps must be followed.

Learning Support students and their invigilators must leave their examination room (question papers and scripts should be taken, if possible, from the room by the Invigilator) and assemble on the All-weather pitch opposite the Gym. Students should stand at the 'K' sign.

Students who are seated in the main examination room (the Gym) will be evacuated via the fire doors at the back of the exam room. All question papers and scripts must remain in the examination rooms. Students will be led in strict silence to the All-weather pitch.

All students must line up at the exam row letter (A to J) and in exam seat order. A register of students will be taken from the seating plan to ensure all students have evacuated the building safely.

All students will be monitored as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination.

Once the all clear has been given by SLT the students will be led back to the exam rooms a row at a time, returning by the same route as before. The finishing time for the exam will be recalculated taking in to account the length of time which has been lost due to the evacuation.

All students must line up at the exam row letter (A to J) and in exam seat order. A register of students will be taken from the seating plan to ensure all students have evacuated the building safely.

All students will be monitored as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination.

Once the all clear has been given by SLT the students will be led back to the exam rooms a row at a time, returning by the same route as before. The finishing time for the exam will be recalculated taking in to account the length of time which has been lost due to the evacuation.

The relevant examination board will be informed of the evacuation and the time adjustment made.

If the decision has been made to put the school into 'Lockdown'

Refer to Lockdown Policy.

10 – Behaviour Policy in Relation to Exams

Good order and the respectful behaviour in and around exam rooms is key to the success of each student. This policy is to set out to show how this will happen at Balshaw's.

Before the exam season the students will have the expectations, in the form of behaviour in and around their exams, reinforced to them in several ways. An assembly will be held and each student will be given a guide to the exam process including expected behaviour in and around the exam rooms.

The EO/SLT member will meet the students as they enter the main exam room to ensure good order. Invigilators will also ensure good order on entry to the main exam room and satellite exam rooms. The EO will start every exam in the main exam room and a member of SLT may also be present to assist with the orderly start to the exam.

To help with any issues around behaviour and/or the identification of students a member of the Balshaw's teaching staff will be present in the main exam hall for the duration of the exam. The member of staff will not be counted as one of the official invigilator team but will act as an observer. The member of staff will not be related to the exam in progress and will have strict instructions to adhere to the exam policy/ICE with specific reference to interacting with the students or the exam papers. The member of staff may mark books which they bring with them but they are not allowed to use a laptop or bring any other device that can be linked to the internet.

If an issue arises with a student the invigilator will in the first instance talk quietly to the student and record the issue on the Incident log. If the invigilator feels the issue to be serious enough or it happens again they will inform the member of staff in the room who may talk to the student. If needed the EO and/or a member of SLT may be summoned to the room to help deal with the issue.

If it is necessary the student will be removed to sit the remainder of the exam in the sterile environment of the inclusion room or the pastoral hub isolation booths with an Invigilator.

If the issue regarding the student is deemed to be serious enough by the Headteacher, the awarding body in question will be informed by the EO.

Any student who absconds during the removal process will have their exam paper collected as finished and the awarding body in question will be informed by the EO.

11 - Candidates, clash candidates and special consideration

Candidates

The school's published rules on acceptable dress, behaviour and candidates' use of mobile phones and all electronic devices apply at all times. A copy is sent in advance to parents.

Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the school accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. A letter is sent home to all *parents to explain this procedure.*

Candidates may leave the exam room for a genuine purpose requiring an immediate return to the exam room, in which case a member of staff must accompany them.

Candidates who arrive late

An attendance Register is taken at the beginning of every examination and The Exams Officer/Pastoral Hub will attempt to contact any candidate who is not present at the start of an exam and deal with them in accordance with JCQ guidelines.

The Exams Officer will wait to escort any candidate who arrives after the start of the examination. The Exams Officer will ensure they have no mobile phone/smart watch and have removed wrist watches. The Exams Officer will go through the rules with the candidate and explain they will be given the full time for the exam. Where a candidate arrives very late for an examination The Exams Officer will follow JCQ rules 21.4. The Exams Officer will follow the same procedure as above, however, ensures that candidates who arrive very late for an exam are reported to the awarding body by submitting a *report on candidate admitted very late to examination room* through CAP to timescale.

Warns candidates that their script may not be accepted by the awarding body.

Absent candidates

Candidates who miss an exam for medical reasons should seek a signed medical note from their doctor without delay and give it to their Head of House/Exams Officer as quickly as possible, so that it can be used in an application for special consideration should the candidate be deemed to meet the criteria for this by the school. Absent candidates will be clearly recorded by the Exams Officer on the attendance register and seating plan.

If a candidate is absent for acceptable reasons, and the centre can verify this, special consideration is applied for if the exam missed is in the final relevant examination session and the “**minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence**” can be met.

Absent candidates but able to sit the exam

Candidates unable to sit the exam for medical reasons at the centre but is able to sit the exam at an alternative venue i.e. at home or in hospital will have the special considerations.

- Inform the exam board and once exam board has given permission a member of Balshaw’s staff will attend the alternative venue with the exam paper and deliver the exam under exam conditions. The candidate will be supervised at all times and the paper will be returned to the centre with the member of Balshaw’s staff.

Clash candidates

The Exams Officer will be responsible as necessary for supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight stays.

Special consideration

Should a candidate be ill before an exam, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be taken ill during the exam itself or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an exam, then it is the candidate’s responsibility to alert the school or the Exams Officer, to that effect.

The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within three days of the exam, for example a letter from the candidate’s doctor.

The Exams Officer will then forward a completed special consideration form to the relevant awarding body within seven days of the exam.

Food and drink in exam Rooms

Candidates are provided with water in clear plastic bottles for exams. No other form of food or drink is allowed in exam rooms.

12 – Non-Examination Assessments and appeals against internal assessments

NEA

Candidates who have to prepare NEA materials should do so by the end of the course, or the appropriate date.

Curriculum Leaders will ensure all NEA materials are ready for despatch at the correct time. The Exams Officer will keep a record of what has been sent when and to whom.

Marks for all internally assessed work and estimated grades are provided to the Exams Officer by the Curriculum Leaders and the subject teachers.

Appeals against Internal Assessments

Reviews of marking - centre assessed marks (GCSE controlled assessments and GCSE non-examination assessments).

Balshaw's is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff mark candidates' work this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.

Candidates' work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, and who have been trained in this activity. Balshaw's is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where a number of subject teachers are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking.

In being informed of their centre assessed marks, if a candidate believes that the above procedures were not followed in relation to the marking of his/her work, or that the assessor has not properly applied the mark scheme to his/her marking, then he/she may make use of this appeals procedure to consider whether to request a review of the centre's marking.

1. Balshaw's will ensure that candidates are informed of their centre assessed marks so that they may request a review of the centre's marking before marks are submitted to the awarding body.
2. Balshaw's will inform candidates that they may request copies of materials to assist them in considering whether to request a review of the centre's marking of the assessment.
3. Balshaw's will, having received a request for copies of materials, promptly make them available to the candidate.
4. Balshaw's will provide candidates with sufficient time in order to allow them to review copies of materials and reach a decision.
5. Balshaw's will provide a clear deadline for candidates to submit a request for a review of the Centre's marking. Requests will not be accepted after this deadline. Requests **must** be made in writing.
6. Balshaw's will allow sufficient time for the review to be carried out, to make any necessary changes to marks and to inform the candidate of the outcome, all before the awarding body's deadline.
7. Balshaw's will ensure that the review of marking is carried out by an assessor who has appropriate competence, has had no previous involvement in the assessment of that candidate and has no personal interest in the review.
8. Balshaw's will instruct the reviewer to ensure that the candidate's mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre.
9. Balshaw's will inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the review of the centre's marking.
10. The outcome of the review of Balshaw's marking will be made known to the head of centre.

A written record of the review will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request.

The moderation process carried out by the awarding bodies may result in a mark change, either upwards or downwards, even after an internal review. The internal review process is in place to ensure consistency of marking within the centre, whereas moderation by the awarding body ensures that centre marking is in line with national standards. The mark submitted to the awarding body is subject to change and should therefore be considered provisional.

Reference is also made to the Non-Examination Assessment Policy including Risk Assessment: Policy and Complaints and appeals procedure (exams).

13 - Results, enquiries about results (EARs) and access to scripts (ATS)

Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days either in person at the school or by post to their home addresses (candidates to provide sae).

Arrangements for the school to be open on results days are made by the Headteacher.

The provision of staff on results days is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

Post- results services

Head of centre

- Ensures an **internal appeals procedure** is available where candidates disagree with any centre decision not to support a clerical re-check, a review of marking, a review of moderation or an appeal
- Ensures that senior members of centre staff are available immediately after the publication of results
- Understands that if the centre has concerns about one of its component/subject cohorts, then requests for reviews of marking should be submitted for all candidates believed to be affected (candidate consent is required as marks and subject grades may be lowered, confirmed or raised)

If a result is queried, the Exams Officer, teaching staff and Headteacher will investigate the feasibility of asking for a review of marking at the school's expense.

When the school does not uphold a request for a Post-result service, a candidate may apply to have an enquiry carried out. If a candidate requires this against the advice of subject staff, they will be charged.

ATS

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of papers within three days' scrutiny of the results.

Curriculum leaders may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

GCSE re-marks cannot be applied for once a script has been returned.

(See also section 5: Exam fees)

14 - Certificates

Certificates are presented in person at Awards Evening in the Autumn term following the sitting of the exams or collected and signed for.

Certificates may be collected on behalf of a candidate by a third party, provided they have been authorised to do so with a signed letter or email permission and have photo ID.

The school retains certificates one year, after which they are destroyed.

15 – Data Protection –GDPR

Please refer to Data Protection Policy.

16 – Examination Contingency Plan

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Balshaw's High School. 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 **Dfe, Ofqual** and **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland**.

This plan also confirms Balshaws CE High school is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, *General Regulations for Approved Centres 2021-22* 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.*

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the exam cycle not undertaken including:

1. **Planning**
 - a. annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered

Policies (E)

- b. annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
- c. sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained

2. **Entries**

- a. awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
- b. candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
- c. awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred

3. **Pre-exams**

- a. *invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting exams*
- b. *exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared*
- c. *candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates*
- d. *confidential exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions*
- e. *internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators*

4. **Exam time**

- a. exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
- b. required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- c. candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies

5. **Results and post-results**

- a. access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- b. the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions:

- Exams Officer works from home using email and remote access if illness/injury permits.
- Use of Deputy/Assistant Headteacher/Office Admin as temporary Exam Officer.

2. SEND coordinator 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:

1. **Planning**
 - a. *candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements*
 - b. *centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010*
 - c. *evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated*
2. **Pre-exams**
 - a. approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
 - b. modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
 - c. staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
3. **Exam time**
 - a. access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions:

- Appoint an acting SEND to take on the role of the absent member of staff.

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:

- SLT/Curriculum Leader /Second in Department to hold meeting to decide on plan of action and ensure deadlines are met.

4. Invisilators - lack of appropriately trained invisilators or invisilator absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invisilators to conduct exams
- Invisilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invisilator absence on the day of an exam

Centre actions:

- Invisilator training in place early in the cycle.
- Keep a data base of past/possible invisilators.

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:

- Use of the Hall, dining room or Dance Studio.
- School Business Manager to source an alternative venue.

6. 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:

- Consult with Network Manager/Virtue and BT/LCC to get system up and running.
- Inform awarding bodies via telephone.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams

Centre actions

- Inform the exam board and LCC of the situation

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- Remote learning opportunities.
- Inform Awarding Bodies.
- Inform LCC.

9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a family crisis – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

Centre actions:

School to communicate with parents and students via the following methods:

- Personal telephone call.
- Reasons for nonattendance established and possible alternative arrangements sort.
- Relevant exam board informed

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions:

- Immediately inform awarding bodies of the need to use an alternative venue possible Runshaw College.
- Find and arrange for a suitable alternative venue.
- Confirm details of new venue with awarding bodies and request permission for the change.
- School to communicate with parents and students via the following methods:

- A. Synergy email message.
- B. Information placed on school website.
- C. Personal telephone call.
- D. Announcement on local radio station.

11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- Communicate with awarding bodies.
- Be prepared to receive emailed scripts.
- Put admin team on alert for large, urgent, confidential print run.

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions:

- Communicate with awarding bodies.
- Arrange for secure storage (school Examination safe).
- Reschedule collection.

13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- Inform awarding bodies.
- Obtain police/fire brigade reports.
- Salvage anything possible.
- Produce lists of forecast grades.

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

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:

- Work with Network Manager and awarding bodies to resolve issues.
- Keep students and parents informed via text/email messages, school website and school social media.
- Arrange alternative date with students and parents.

Department for Education – Contingencies for 2021-2022 For Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) and other general qualifications.

[Contingencies for 2021-2022.pdf](#)

Ofqual – Joint Contingency Plan

[Ofqual Joint Contingency Plan updated 30th September 2021.docx](#)

JCQ

Aims of the Joint Contingency Plan

The Joint Contingency Plan is aimed at centres – schools and colleges – and is designed to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the examination system affecting significant numbers of candidates across several awarding organisations.

All awarding organisations are required to have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to such disruptions, and these have been implemented already on numerous occasions.

This Joint Contingency Plan takes into account these processes and procedures and is designed to complement them, not replace them.

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, Qualifications Wales and CCEA Accreditation.

Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of candidates while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards.

The contingencies applied will be selected based on the context of the disruption and have been implemented on several occasions in response to localised issues. They would be applied on a larger scale in response to any widespread disruption at a national level.

The priority when implementing contingencies will be to maintain three principles:

- delivering assessments to published timetables
- delivering results to published timetables
- complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.

If the usual contingencies are no longer sufficient to maintain these outcomes, an identified Crisis Management Team consisting of representatives of all organisations involved will be convened by JCQ to agree the additional actions required

Communications

The scale of the exams, qualifications and testing system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is huge, involving more than a million learners each year and thousands of centres. It is vital that a

system of this size has robust and coordinated contingency plans in place to deal with any major disruption that may affect candidates.

In the event of major disruption, each awarding organisation must notify the regulator of anything that impacts their individual ability to operate. Communication is a key factor in ensuring an effective and consistent response across the agencies involved. This includes communications between the organisations involved in the response and communications to stakeholders such as centres, candidates, parents or carers and the public.

At the first indication of such an event, awarding organisations are required to notify the regulators.

The regulators, Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA Accreditation 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.

The organisations involved in this Joint Contingency Plan are committed to:

- sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan
- communicating with stakeholders so they are aware of disruption to the exams, the contingency measures being implemented, and any actions required of them as a result
- ensuring that any messages to the public are clear and accurate.

Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centres are closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- centres are 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.

Recommended actions:

Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.

- in the case of modular courses, centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series.
- centres should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning.

Guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-planengland-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-ifexams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

2. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations.
- Recommended actions:
 - awarding organisations to source alternative couriers for delivery of hardcopies.
 - awarding organisations to change the timing of the distribution to earlier or later than originally scheduled
 - awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. Centres would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions and should 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

Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis - centres remain open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- candidates are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations as normal.
- Recommended actions:
 - centres to invoke centre contingency plan. This must focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations.

Information on what schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-planengland-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-ifexams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

- Awarding organisations will ensure that any applications for special considerations as a result of disruption will be reviewed across awarding organisations to ensure consistency of decision making

Centres are unable to open as normal during the examination period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- centres unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations. Recommended actions:

- centres to invoke centre contingency plan, which must focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations. As part of their general planning for emergencies, centres should cover the impact on examinations. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre. The head is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether their centres is able to open.

Information on what schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-planengland-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-ifexams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

- Awarding organisations will ensure that any applications for special considerations as a result of disruption will be reviewed across awarding organisations to ensure consistency of decision making

Disruption to transporting completed examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence.
Recommended actions:
- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations arrange collections, centres should seek advice from awarding organisations and should not make their own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.
- for any examinations where centres make their own arrangements for transportation, centres should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.
- centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection.

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

Recommended actions

- 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

Disruption to the scanning process – where completed examination papers are being scanned in preparation for onscreen marking

Criteria for implementation of plan

- scanning process disrupted beyond acceptable levels resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates.

Recommended actions:

- awarding organisations to implement their existing contingency plans for disruption to on-screen marking process
- awarding organisations to revert to alternatives form of marking
- prioritisation of scanning to be based on results dates.

Markers unable to mark examination papers according to marking schedules

Criteria for implementation of plan

- markers are unable to mark examination papers resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates.

Recommended actions:

- awarding organisations to re-allocate scripts to available markers
- awarding organisations to recruit, train or re-standardise qualified additional markers
- awarding organisations to consider the proportion of marking required to be completed for grade boundary setting
- prioritisation of marking to be based on results dates.

Difficulty in meeting results schedule

Criteria for implementation of plan

- significant inability to meet schedule for publication of results.

Recommended actions:

- awarding organisations must notify the regulators of any such instance
- awarding organisations to establish priorities for results processing
- awarding organisations to implement existing contingency plans for disruption to the results processing schedule
- awarding organisations to assess level of disruption and consider options for issuing results in alternative format(s)
- awarding organisations and regulators liaise with relevant organisations (ie UCAS, CAO) regarding process of candidate progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations unable to issue results as planned

Criteria for implementation of plan

- awarding organisations unable to distribute electronic results due to failure of systems facilitating results delivery
- awarding organisations unable to distribute hard copy results

Recommended actions:

Where results are due to be issued electronically:

- awarding organisations to implement existing contingency plans for disruption to the issuing of results
- awarding organisations transmit results via alternative electronic formats
awarding organisations issue hardcopy results.

Where results are due to be issued in hardcopy:

- awarding organisations to facilitate communication of results via secure web-based platforms.

Centres are unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

Criteria for implementation of plan

- centres are unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post results services.

Recommended actions:

Distribution of results:

- centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
- centres to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
- centres 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
- centres to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible
- awarding organisations to review the post results deadlines

Summary of responsibilities in the event of disruption to examinations

- JCQ is responsible for coordinating across awarding organisations, including convening the crisis management team

- Regulators (Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA Accreditation in Northern Ireland) are responsible for sharing timely and accurate information, as required with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders

Awarding organisations are responsible for:	Examination centres are responsible for:
	Preparing plans for any disruption to exams as part of centres' general emergency planning
Ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations	Preparing candidates for examinations
	Ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations
	Ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and candidate work are stored under secure conditions
	Deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding organisations if the centre is unable to open
Advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining/approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements	Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding organisations
Evaluating and declining/approving requests for special consideration	Judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration as a result of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding organisations
	Assessing and liaising with awarding organisations in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers
Marking, moderating and grading candidate work	
Issuing results to centres on scheduled dates	The distribution of examination results to candidate

Useful information

AQA www.aqa.org.uk/

CCEA www.ccea.org.uk

City & Guilds www.cityandguilds.com

NCFE www.ncfe.org.uk

OCR www.ocr.org.uk/

Pearson www.qualifications.pearson.com

WJEC www.wjec.co.uk/

UCAS www.ucas.ac.uk/

JCQ www.jcq.org.uk

Regulators

CCEA www.ccea.org.uk/regulation

Ofqual www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual

Qualifications Wales www.qualificationswales.org

Government

DfE www.education.gov.uk/

DENI www.deni.gov.uk/

Welsh Government <https://gov.wales/.uk>

Useful documents

Ofqual three-country guidance on what schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-systemcontingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-andcolleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriouslydisrupted>

JCQ access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration

www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-specialconsideration/regulations-and-guidance

JCQ instructions for conducting examinations

www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting examinations

Policies (E)

DfE guidance on dealing with disruption to teaching and learning

http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/emergency_planning/a00694_25/advice-on-severe-weather

DENI guidance on dealing with disruption to teaching and learning

www.deni.gov.uk/exceptional_closures_checklist.pdf