



# EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN

2022/23

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Reviewed by: Ellie Baron	
Authorised by: Stephen Cooke	
Date of next review	Autumn 2023

## Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Stephen Cooke
Senior Leader	Rebecca Lemar
SENCo	Ryan Bold
Exams Officer	Ellie Baron

## Purpose of the policy

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process.

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 at Unity Academy Blackpool.

Alongside internal processes this plan is informed by the Ofqual **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the publication, 'What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted' and the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This plan details how Unity Academy Blackpool complies with the JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3, Centre management) by having in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.

## Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

### 1. Exams officer absence at key points in the exam process (exam cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

- annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered
- annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
- sufficient invigilators not recruited

Entries

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

Pre-exams

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

Exam time

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

## Results and post-results

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

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

Centre actions for planning, entries, pre-exams and exam time

- Assistance will be sought from other schools within the trust and the responsibility for coordinating this will lie with Senior Leader i/c exams.

Centre actions for results and post-results

- Senior Leader i/c exams to contact the Awarding Bodies to discuss alternative options
- Another Exams Officer at another FCAT academy to assist with accessing and disseminating results and post-results services

## **2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam process (exam cycle)**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks required in the management and administration of the access arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

Planning

- candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
- centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010
- evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated

Pre-exams

- approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
- centre-delegated arrangements not put in place
- modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

Exam time

- access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

- Unity Academy Blackpool has a second SENCo who would be able to cover the absence
- The timescales between testing at the start of Year 10 and the final exams at the end of Year 11 would be sufficient time for alternative arrangements to be put in place

## **3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam process (exam cycle)**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late/late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled

- Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

- In the event of a teacher absence, the above tasks will lie with the Head of Faculty to delegate or undertake

#### **4. Invigilators – lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

- Invigilator recruitment will be a continuous process to ensure the consistent availability of invigilators
- All invigilators are required to attend mandatory training sessions prior to engagement during the exam periods
- FCAT has a large bank of invigilators; were Unity Academy Blackpool to fall short on any given day during an Exams Season, the Exams Officer can contact another FCAT school for assistance

#### **5. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venue(s) unavailable at short notice**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exams officer unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days
- Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, make use of other available rooms within the centre, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- (where main exam venue(s) unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time) where possible, move to alternative venue, prioritising candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned

Alternative venue details:

To be confirmed

- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

To be confirmed

- ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

## **6. Cyber-attack**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

To be confirmed

## **7. Failure of IT systems**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

- Due to Unity Academy Blackpool being part of a multi-academy trust, in the event of a systems failure on-site, the Exams Officer would be able to seek help and use MIS in one of the other academies

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy)
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- (after the exam) consider whether any candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- recognise it remains the responsibility of the centre to prepare students, as usual, for examinations
- facilitate alternative methods of learning
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning

Communication details:

- Office Manager to contact parents/students by text and/or email
- IT Support to post a relevant message on the Academy's website, and other social media, such as Twitter
- take advice offered by the awarding body regarding alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available
- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- advise candidates, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date

Other centre actions:

- Alternative provision would be made at another FCAT Academy

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- take advice offered by the awarding body on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control
- identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding body, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Communication details:

- Office Manager to contact parents/students by text and/or email advising of the new arrangements, and change of venue.
- IT Support to post a relevant message on the Academy's website, and other social media, such as Twitter
- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre is able to open
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions
- discuss alternative arrangements with the awarding body if the exam or assessment cannot take place
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- where accommodation is limited, prioritise candidates whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue

Alternative venue details:

Principal to contact the other Academies within Fylde Coast Academies Trust, and make arrangements for students to sit their exams at another site.

Communication details:

- Office Manager to contact parents/students by text and/or email advising of the new arrangements, and change of venue.
- IT Support to post a relevant message on the Academy's website, and other social media, such as Twitter.
- consider whether any candidates' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration

## **12. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact if the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own collection arrangements, investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations'
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding body
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own collection arrangements, investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations'
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection

### **14. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked**

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked
- Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

#### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- liaise with the awarding body to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding body
- where marks cannot be generated by awarding body, inform candidates they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series

### **15. Centre unable to distribute results as normal (including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency) 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

The centre will:

- make arrangements to access its results at an alternative venue/share facilities with another centre if this is possible, in agreement with the relevant awarding body
- make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative venue

Alternative venue details:

- If the above criteria is centre-based, then other FCAT Academy facilities can be used to access, manage, and distribute results if necessary.
- make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
- contact the relevant awarding body if electronic post results requests are not possible
- inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services

Communication details:

- Office Manager to contact parents/students by text and/or email advising of the new arrangements, and change of venue.
- IT Support to post a relevant message on the Academy's website, and other social media, such as Twitter.

### **16. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process**

Cause of disruption

No further causes identified

### **Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above**

Not applicable

### **CHANGES 2022/2023**

(Added) Under Purpose of the plan: new heading 'Operating across more than one centre' and field for completion

(Added) Under Possible causes of disruption to the exam process: new cause '6. Cyber-attack' and fields for completion. This means that causes 6-15, have now changed to causes 7-16

(Added) Under cause 11. Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency): new field for completion 'Alternative venue details'

(Amended/added) Under Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning: guidance and links to current information

### **CENTRE-SPECIFIC CHANGES**

Upon review in Autumn 2022, no centre-specific updates or changes were applicable to this document