



Unity Academy Blackpool

An Academy within the Fylde Coast Academy Trust

Examinations Contingency Plan

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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 Unity Academy Blackpool. 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 scenarios contained in the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

The centre agrees to “*have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;*”

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:

- *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 and trained
- *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*
 - exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
 - candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
 - 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

Examinations Officer charged with the responsibility to ensure that all of the above are undertaken within a suitable timescale, and communicated to his/her Line Manager on a regular basis, and completed ahead of a set deadline.

Any failure to communicate with said Line Manager, or to meet said deadline will be flagged by the Line Manager, and steps taken to address as to why.

- *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 e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
 - candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies

Centre actions:

- The Examinations Officer is primarily responsible for the above, and is advised of any late arrivals, suspected malpractice, or special consideration by the Invigilators, following which the appropriate actions, as per JCQ Rules and Regulations, are carried out, and relevant forms completed/despached.
- The Examinations Officer to communicate with the relevant Awarding Body to arrange an alternative form of collection, whilst also ensuring the safe, secure storage of the completed scripts.

- *Results and post-results*

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

Centre actions:

- Examinations Officer to contact the Awarding Bodies to discuss alternative options.
- If the access to results is Centre-based, then another Examinations Officer at one of the other FCAT Academies will be able to access them.
- All FCAT Academies are doing the same GCSE Specifications/Courses.

2. SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

- *Planning*
 - candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
 - 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
 - modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
 - staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- *Exam time*
 - access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

Centre actions:

- Unity Academy Blackpool has a second SENCo who is fully qualified to cover.
- The timescales between testing at the start of Y10, and the final exams at the end of Y11 is sufficient for alternative arrangements to be put in place (second SENCo, or the assistance of another SENCo from one of FCAT's other Academies)

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

Centre actions:

- The Examinations Officer is time-served, and experienced; all of the above points have, and will always be dealt with in an efficient and effective manner.
- In the event of a teacher absence, the task of providing the Examinations Officer with the required information will fall to the Head of Faculty.

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:

- All invigilators are required to attend mandatory training sessions prior to employment.
- FCAT has a large bank of available Invigilators; were Unity Academy to fall short on any given day during an Exams Season, the Exams Officer can contact another of FCAT's Academies for assistance.

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:

- Due to the size, and nature of Unity Academy Blackpool, the first two points are highly unlikely.
- In the event of the loss of the main hall, the sports hall would be used.

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:

- Due to Unity Academy Blackpool being part of FCAT, in the event of a systems failure on-site, the Examinations Officer would be able to visit one of the other Academies, and access their MIS in order to fulfil the above points.

7. 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

The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this. [Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 1]

Centre actions:

- Alternative provision would be made at another FCAT Academy.
- See details in the Business Contingency Plans, and Emergency Plan created by Gary Fletcher.

8. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a 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:

- Principal to contact the other Academies within Fylde Coast Academies Trust, and make arrangements for students to sit their exams at another site.
- Office Manager to contact parents/students by text and/or email advising of the new arrangements, and change of venue.
- Vice Principal (Assessment), or Publicity and Social Media Officer to contact local radio.
- Publicity and Social Media Officer to post a relevant message on the Academy's website, and other social media, such as Twitter.
- Examinations Officer to:
 - *Immediately contact the relevant Awarding Bodies to make them aware of the issue.*
 - *Ensure the safe and secure transportation, delivery/storage of examinations materials to/at the new location.*
 - *Advise the relevant Awarding Body and JCQ of the circumstances, and change in venue.*
 - *Complete all the relevant paperwork, and despatch to the relevant Awarding Body, and/or JCQ.*

9. 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:

- Principal to contact the other Academies within Fylde Coast Academies Trust, and make arrangements for students to sit their exams at another site.
- Office Manager to contact parents/students by text and/or email advising of the new arrangements, and change of venue.
- Vice Principal (Assessment), or Publicity and Social Media Officer to contact local radio.
- Publicity and Social Media Officer to post a relevant message on the Academy's website, and other social media, such as Twitter.
- Examinations Officer to:
 - *Ensure the safe and secure transportation, delivery/storage of examinations materials to/at the new location.*
 - *Advise the relevant Awarding Body and JCQ of the circumstances, and change in venue.*
 - *Complete all the relevant paperwork, and despatch to the relevant Awarding Body, and/or JCQ.*

10. Disruption due to a national tragic event

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption due to a widespread, sustained national, or local disruption during the May/June examination series.

Centre actions:

- All students will already have been issued with a 'Summer 2019 Exams – Contingency Day' letter outlining the decision by JCQ that they need the option to postpone an exam in the event of an incident, and rearrange for a later date, to allow all students a fair and equal chance.
- All exam candidates must be available to sit exams from the start of the exams in May **until** Wednesday 26 June 2019.
- Students will not be expected to be in school that day unless they have a scheduled examination, however, **they must be available and not away on holiday.**

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:

- Examinations Officer to communicate with the relevant Awarding Body to organise alternative delivery of papers.

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:

- Examinations Officer to communicate with the relevant Awarding Body to arrange an alternative form of collection, whilst also ensuring the safe, secure storage of the completed scripts.

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:

- Head of Centre to immediately communicate this to the relevant Awarding Body, and subsequently to the relevant students and their parents/carers.

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

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:

- Examinations Officer to contact the Awarding Bodies to discuss alternative options.
- If the above criteria is centre-based, then other FCAT Academy facilities can be used to access, manage, and distribute results if necessary.

Causes 7-13 – all scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

Ofqual

Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

JCQ

General regulations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Guidance on alternative site arrangements

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms>

Instructions for conducting examinations

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

A guide to the special consideration process

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

GOV.UK

Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings

<https://www.gov.uk/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide>