

Exam 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. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed 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 information contained in the *Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* where it is stated that "APAs should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant APA staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur."

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

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

APA actions

- SLT to appoint a temporary exams officer in the event of usual Exam Officer being absent for an extended period of time. In the case that both are absent, the Principal will step into position
- Key invigilators to support exams officer with regard to exam day procedures and set ups

1. 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
 - dyslexia testing is carried out
 - 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

APA actions

SLT to appoint appropriately qualified SENCo staff to cover long term absence. Advice can be obtained from the SENCo Raising Standards Leader.

2. 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*

APA actions

- SLT/Subject Lead to appoint appropriately qualified staff to cover long term absence
- EO & SLT to make sure exam entry deadlines are known to all subject leads and a timetable of entry set up

3. 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

APA actions

- EO to timetable staff appropriately to invigilate exams
- EO to maintain an emergency list of invigilators to call in at short notice
- EO to ensure a rolling programme of invigilator training

4. 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 expected incident at exam time

APA actions

- EO to identify appropriate venues on school site where possible
- EO to liaise with site staff/IT technicians to inform them of any additional requirements
- If no on-site rooms available SLT to look at possibility of using sites at other schools and or other APA sites

5. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- System failure at final entry deadline
- System failure during exams preparation
- System failure at results release time

APA actions

- EO/SLT to liaise with IT provider
- EO to inform relevant exam boards of system failure and follow their advice/instructions

6. Disruption of teaching time – APA closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- APA 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.

APA actions

- Communications with students may be maintained via APA texting service and the information posted home
- SLT to identify opportunities to catch up lost teaching time, where possible

7. APA unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- APA unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

In the event that the head of APA decides the APA cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding body must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

APA actions

- EO to investigate whether APA can open for exams only
- In the event that APA cannot open, EO to inform and liaise with relevant exam boards and follow their advice and instructions
- EO/SLT to identify alternative accommodation if possible
- Alternatively, EO/SLT to inform candidates that they must sit the next exam series available
- EO to apply for Special Consideration where an exam candidate is unable to attend exam and does not wish to sit next exam series

8. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – APA remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

APA actions

- EO to investigate whether candidates can sit exams in alternative venue
- EO to apply to relevant exam boards for Special Consideration where candidates have been unable to attend exams
- Alternatively, candidates may sit next exam series available

9. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

APA actions

- EO to ensure secure storage of examination scripts overnight and arrange for prompt collection the following day
- In the event of a bank holiday, weekend or school holiday delaying normal collection arrangements, the EO to take examination scripts directly to Parcelforce Worldwide Depot

10. 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

APA actions

- EO to liaise with relevant exam boards and follow their procedures for applying for dispensation in the event of large scale damage/destruction of completed examination scripts/assessments
- Candidates to retake affected assessment at subsequent assessment window if possible

11. APA unable to distribute results as normal

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- APA is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

APA actions

- EO to relocate to an alternative APA and inform Awarding Bodies/Governing Body of situation
- EO to inform candidates where to collect their results from – by text and letter if there is time

information taken from the *Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning:

Policies

Business Continuity Plan

Ofqual

Guidance for schools, colleges and other centres:

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

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 - Contingency planning

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

JCQ

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>

Guidance on *access arrangements and special consideration* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>