



Carisbrooke College

Contingency Plan

2025/26

Centre Number: 59010

Contents

	Purpose of the plan	3
1.	Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process cycle	4
2.	SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	4
3.	Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle	5
4.	Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence	5
5.	Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice	6
6.	Cyber Attack	7
7.	Failure of IT systems	8
8.	Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)	8
9.	Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centre closed for an extended period	9
10.	Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open	9
11.	Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period	10
12.	Disruption in the distribution of examination papers	10
13.	Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts	11
14.	Assessment evidence is not available to be marked	11
15.	Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services	12

Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Natalie Sheppard
Senior Leader (s)	Karen Begley
Exams Officer	Linda Tillson
SENDCo	Zoe Divers

Purpose of the plan

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

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 and the JCQ document **Preparing for disruption to examinations** (Effective from 1 September 2024).

This plan also confirms Carisbrooke College's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) that the centre has in place for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually:

- a written contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery.

Contingency arrangements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 3.17-19), Carisbrooke College must have an up to date written contingency plan.

The contingency plan must cover all aspects of examination/assessment administration and delivery. Senior leaders must have robust contingency arrangements in place that will minimise the risk to examination/assessment administration and delivery and any adverse impact on candidates.

The plan must cover the following scenarios:

- the head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENCo (or equivalent role), examinations officer or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle
- the potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- potential issues with the centre's IT systems

As part of the contingency plan the centre must identify an alternative site if examinations cannot be conducted at the registered address. Larger centres may require more than one potential alternative site or different sites for different Year Groups.

Carisbrooke College must have at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact) who is available to manage emergency requests from awarding bodies that are results related during the summer holidays. However, a number of contacts can be provided to reduce the risk of this falling on one individual throughout the summer holidays.

Carisbrooke College must ensure that candidates' work is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up. Appropriate security arrangements must be implemented which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that Carisbrooke College responds to the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year which includes providing senior designated contact details (this might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). These must be the contact details of someone who can be reached in an emergency if the centre is closed over the summer and who can mobilise resources to respond to the issue.

Head of centre absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Where the Head of Centre may be absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle, main duties and responsibilities will be escalated to the HISP MAT Executive Team.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exam officer extended absence at a critical stage of the 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 allocation; 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 the post-results services

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Head of School will take responsibility for the oversight of the examination process/series and delegate individual tasks to appropriately qualified and trained support staff
- A delegated member of support staff will be seconded to liaise with the Exams Officer from the other local HISP MAT centres (Medina College 59022) to ensure that all aspects above are considered and acted upon with full support.
- The centre will also utilise exam board support services, such as OCR Emergency Exams Officer Contingency Service, to ensure that all aspects of the exam cycle are covered.

2. SENDCo (or equivalent role) extended absence at a critical stage 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
- 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

- An appropriately qualified member of staff from SEND will be seconded to liaise with other SEND staff within HISP MAT to ensure that all aspects are considered and acted upon.
- Where there is not an appropriately qualified Assessor on site, Carisbrooke College will engage the services of an outside assessor.

3. Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage 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 (including controlled assessments and coursework) 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

- Exams Officer will liaise with the Head of School, Assistant Headteacher responsible for Teaching and Learning, and Curriculum Leaders to ensure that all entries and internal assessment marks are in on time.
- The Head of School, Assistant Headteacher responsible for T&L and Curriculum Leaders to ensure that non-examination tasks are completed and marked within the requisite time scales, and that candidates are informed of centre assessed marks prior to submission to the awarding body.

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

- Invigilation staff from one of the other local HISP MAT centres (59022 or 59024) will be used where possible.
- Where not possible, appropriately trained support staff will be used to fill in gaps in the invigilation timetable.
- When not possible to source appropriately trained staff from within the school or local HISP MAT centres, agency staff may be used providing they have the appropriate training.

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- where main exam venue(s) is 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) is 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

Initially, if possible, alternative venues in the centre will be used:

Carisbrooke College (59010)

If the Sports Hall is unavailable then the Hall and Drama Studio will be used. If the allocated small rooms are unavailable then other classrooms will be prepared and used, displacing lower year group students if necessary.

If the whole of one of the sites (centres) was unavailable for use then one of the other centres would be used. The centre will contact the awarding bodies to inform them of the situation and obtain advice.

Carisbrooke College, in the first instance, would move students to Medina College. Students due to sit examinations in the CC Sports Hall would sit them in the MC Sports Hall (as half of the Sports Hall is available) if necessary. Small room provision would be on the with ML or H corridor classrooms, near the MC student small rooms/in rooms that have previously been used at MC.

The second option would be The Island VI Form (59024)

The Head of School would arrange for desks and chairs to be moved to the site as necessary. The schools minibuses would be used and by facilities staff. If necessary a van would be rented at short notice from Premier Ford, Enterprise or Bartletts.

Students moving sites would be held and supervised securely, with no access to mobile phones or outside communication until they were able to start the examination. Students will make their own way to

the amended venue if notified early. Otherwise, the school minibuses would be used (after furniture moved) or Southern Vectis would be contacted for emergency bus use.

If necessary, as above, one cohort can sit the exam, and as long as the other cohort of students have been held securely, they will complete the exam in the same venue, once finished.

In the event that all three centres are unavailable Carisbrooke College would contact the local authority to request support, and contact the relevant awarding bodies.

Ensure the secure transportation of question papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue. This would involve at least two members of staff (one of which would be a member of the exams team).

(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

Communication details

- Arbor (MIS) would be used to contact parents/ carers, as well as social media.
- Notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using Centre Admin Portal (CAP).

6. Cyber Attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Where are cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

Carisbrooke College will

- Ensure there are procedures in place to maintain the security of user accounts by:
- providing training for authorised staff on the importance of creating strong unique passwords and keeping all account details secret
- providing training for staff on awareness of all types of social engineering/ phishing attempts
- enabling additional security settings wherever possible
- updating any passwords that may have been exposed
- setting up secure account recovery options
- reviewing and managing connected applications
- monitoring accounts and regularly reviewing account access, including removing access when no longer required
- ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding bodies' online systems in line with awarding body regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document Guidance for centres on cyber security
- Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding bodies' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements.
- reporting any actual or suspected compromise of an awarding body's online systems immediately to the relevant awarding body
- The centre has in place robust security and procedures (approved by the D of E) to help prevent potential cyber attacks.
- Inform the ICO, Department of Education, Local Authority and Exam Boards who will offer support and advice
- Use Exam board secure sites to retrieve required information

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

IT system corruption affecting candidates' work

MIS system failure at final entry deadline

MIS system failure during exams preparation

MIS system failure at results release time

Internet failure during exam

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- Ensure that candidates' work is backed-up and should consider the contingency of candidates' work being backed-up on two separate devices, including one off-site back-up. Implement appropriate security arrangements which protect candidates' work in the event of IT system corruption and cyber-attacks.
- Entries/results will be administered through the exam board secure websites. All registers and seating plans will be printed in advance in case of IT failure on the day of the exam. Support may be requested from the other federated centres if necessary.
- Exams location and student information is held in the cloud, and accessible from any location, where it can be printed again.
- Mi-Fi standalone internet connections available for Chromebooks to be connected to.
- Second fullback up internet connection being installed for reliable back-up.
- If full outage of internet connection on one site known in advance, students using IT provision will be moved to alternative site. Please see alternative venue section in section 5.
- If internet means that reading software is not accessible, trained staff will act as readers.

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

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
- Centre will remain open for exams where possible. In an emergency/crisis exams will be moved to an alternate federated centre (see alternative venue details in section 5).
- Students/carers will be notified by school communication systems, website local press. The centre will contact the awarding bodies as soon as possible and they will offer advice.
- Students will be held securely.

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

- facilitate alternative methods of learning, live lessons via Google Classroom, work set via Google Classroom - which can be accessed at home.
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) information relating to alternative methods of learning
- Where/when appropriate centre may use facilities at one of the other federated sites.

Communication details:

- 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
- Communication via Arbor (MIS) and social media.

10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates may not be able to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal because of a crisis.

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

The centre will:

- Consider moving the starting time of the examination for all candidates (see section 6.2 of the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations) Be aware of the rules for very late arrivals (see section 21 of the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations) Wherever possible, it is always in the best interest for candidates to sit the examination. However, special consideration is an option where a candidate is unable to sit the examination (see Chapter 4 of the JCQ document A guide to the special consideration process) The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required
- 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
- Consider having the candidate sit the examination/s at an alternate site, including -in the case of an individual candidate - sitting the examination/s at home.

- Communicate with the relevant awarding organisations to make them aware of the situation and complete the relevant paperwork, look for solutions.
- Communicate with candidates/carers regarding possible solutions.
- Apply for special consideration where appropriate.

Communication details:

- 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 may not be able 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 may not be able to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The decision on whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies. Special consideration is an option if all other avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the published criteria. The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required.
- contact the relevant awarding body as soon as possible and follow its instructions (This could include implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations and notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP).)
- 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

- See alternative venue details in section 5.
- Notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using Centre Admin Portal (CAP).

Communication details:

- Communication to parents/carers via Arbor (MIS) and social media.
- 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

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- liaise with awarding bodies regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions
- follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances
- understand that as a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, awarding organisations will consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date
- communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
- 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
- Papers could be printed securely if sent by exam boards, if necessary.

13. Delay in collection arrangements for 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

- Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, centres contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions.
- For examinations where centres make their own collection arrangements, they should investigate alternative options that comply with the JCQ document Instructions for conducting examinations
- Centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until as close to the collection time as possible)

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

- 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
- Head of centre to communicate with the awarding organisations, students, parents and carers.

- Awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations

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

(including in the event of the centre being unavailable on results day owing to an unforeseen emergency)

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

- 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
- Distribution of results: centre to make arrangements to access its results at one of the other federated sites, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
- Centre to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services at one of the other federated sites
- Centre to share facilities with one of the other federated sites, in agreement with the relevant **Communication** details:awarding organisation.)
- Facilitation of post results services: Centre to make arrangements to make post results requests at at one of the other federated sites
- Centres to contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible

Alternative venue details

Carisbrooke College could use Medina College or The Island VI Form

The MIS and other electronic information are held in the cloud by Arbor and Google and backed up by Microsoft Azure, so are accessible off site.

Communication details:

- Candidates to be informed of the alternative arrangements via Arbor (MIS) and social media.

Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

DfE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges

[Cyber Security Standards for schools and colleges](#)

Ofqual

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

Contingency planning

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

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

General contingency guidance

- Emergency planning and response from the Department for Education in England
- Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools from the Department for Education in England
- Exceptional closure days from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- Checklist - exceptional closure of schools from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- School closures from NI Direct
- Opening schools in extremely bad weather - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- Procedures for handling bomb threats from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

Disruption to assessments or exams

In the absence of any instruction from the relevant awarding organisation, you should make sure that any exam or timetabled assessment takes place if it is possible to hold it. This may mean relocating to alternative premises.

You should discuss alternative arrangements with your awarding organisation if:

- the exam or assessment cannot take place
- a student misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the student's control

See also: JCQ's notice to centres on exam contingency plans and JCQ's notice on preparing for disruption to examinations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for qualifications within its scope.

Steps you should take

Exam planning

Review contingency plans well in advance of each exam or assessment series. Consider how, if the contingency plan is invoked, you will comply with the awarding organisation's requirements.

In the event of disruption

1. Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
2. Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.

3. Identify whether the exam or timetabled assessment can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation, ensuring the secure transportation of questions papers or assessment materials to the alternative venue.
4. Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
5. In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's Centre emergency evacuation procedure.
6. Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
7. Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

After the exam

1. Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply for special consideration.
2. Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
3. Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
4. Return scripts to awarding organisations in line with their instructions. Never make alternative arrangements for the transportation of completed exam scripts, unless told to do so by the awarding organisation.

Steps the awarding organisation should take

Exam planning

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

In the event of disruption

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

After the exam

Consider any requests for special consideration for affected students. For example, those who may have lost their internally assessed work or whose performance in assessments or exams could have been affected by the disruption.

If any students miss an exam or are disadvantaged by the disruption

If some of the students have been adversely affected by the disruption, you should ask the awarding organisation about applying for special consideration.

Decisions about special consideration, when it is or is not appropriate, is for each awarding organisation to make. Their decisions might be different for different qualifications and for different subjects.

See also:

- JCQ's guidance on special considerations

Wider communications

The regulators, Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

The Department for Education in England, the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and the Welsh Government will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption; and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

Awarding organisations will alert the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Central Applications Office (CAO) about any impact of the disruption on their deadlines and liaise regarding student progression to further and higher education.

Awarding organisations will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

Widespread national disruption to the taking of examinations / assessments

As education is devolved, in the event of any widespread sustained national disruption to examinations or assessments, national government departments will communicate with regulators, awarding organisations and centres prior to a public announcement. Regulators will provide advice to government departments on implications for examinations and assessments, including exam timetables.

In September 2023, Ofqual and the DfE published joint consultation decisions on long-term resilience arrangements. As in 2023, Ofqual has provided guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications. For VTQs and other qualifications used alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels, awarding organisations will provide guidance where needed and will contact schools and colleges with more information.

In December 2022, Qualifications Wales published guidance for contingency assessment arrangements for GCSEs, AS and A levels and Skills Challenge Certificates in the event that a national decision is made to cancel exams. This guidance is still relevant for the current academic year.

The DfE has updated its guidance on handling strike action in schools in England in light of the industrial action in 2023. The guidance recommends schools should prioritise the running of examinations and assessments on any strike days, and should review their contingency plans to make this happen. Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

The DfE has also issued [guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete \(RAAC\)](#) in their buildings. It includes the need for contingencies for possible disruption to examinations and links to the existing emergency planning guidance.

We will update this page as necessary, with any further relevant links, should national disruption occur.

General contingency guidance

- [emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings](#) from the DfE in England
- [handling strike action in schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the DfE in England
- [reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete: guidance for education settings with confirmed RAAC](#) from the DfE in England
- [exceptional closure days: Northern Ireland](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [checklist - exceptional closure of schools](#) from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland
- [school terms and school closures](#) from NI Direct
- [opening schools, childcare and play settings in extreme bad weather and extreme hot weather](#) - guidance for schools from the Welsh Government
- [emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings](#)- guidance for schools and education settings from the Welsh Government
- [protective security and preparedness for education settings](#) from the DfE
- [police guidance](#) from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats
- [cyber security guidance for schools and colleges](#) from the National Cyber Security Centre

15 Contingency planning

- 15.1 The qualification regulators, awarding bodies and government departments responsible for education have prepared and agreed information for schools and colleges in the event of examinations being seriously disrupted. This jointly agreed information will ensure consistency of response in the event of major disruption to the examinations system affecting significant numbers of candidates. Further information may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>
- 15.2 In addition, awarding bodies have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to disruptions. It is important that exams officers who are facing disruption liaise directly with the relevant awarding body/bodies.
- 15.3 All centres must have 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 where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency.

All relevant centre staff must be familiar with the examination contingency plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

- 15.4 In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the centre's contingency plan must be invoked, utilising the centre's alternative site(s) and the relevant awarding bodies must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.
- 15.5 The awarding bodies will designate 'contingency sessions' for examinations, summer 2025. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document [Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#).
- 15.6 The designation of 'contingency sessions' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies' standard contingency planning for examinations.
- 15.7 In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2025, the awarding bodies will liaise with the qualification regulators and government departments to agree the most appropriate option for managing the impact. As a last resort the affected examinations will be rescheduled. Although every effort would be taken to keep the impact to a minimum, it is possible that there could be more than one timetable date affected following the disruption, up to and including the last contingency day. Centres will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body.
- 15.8 Where candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those traditionally covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading arrangements. Centres must therefore ensure candidates and parents are aware of the contingency arrangements so that they may take them into account when making their plans for the summer.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from **Instructions for conducting examinations 2025-2026**
<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>, section 15, Contingency planning)

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

General Regulations for Approved Centres www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms

Guidance notes for transferred candidates www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-form

Instructions for conducting examinations

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

A guide to the special consideration process

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

Guidance for centres on cyber security (Effective from November 2023)

www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/

5 tips to get exam ready and stay cyber safe! www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/blogs/

Information for centres affected by RAAC – the delivery of non-examination assessments and the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/

Further clarification for centres affected by RAAC, Caledonian Modular or similar building issues – March 2024

www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption

www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

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

www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

National Cyber Security Centre

Cyber Security for Schools <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools>

Cyber security training for school staff <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools>