Exam Contingency Plan

Babington Academy

2026/27

Centre Name	Babington Academy
Centre number	25112
Date plan first created	30/10/2024
Current plan approved by	Fiona Laywood
Current plan reviewed by	Edward Herbert
Date of review	October 2026
Date of next review	October 2027

Key staff involved in the plan	Name
Head of centre	Fiona Laywood
Senior leader(s)	Edward Herbert (Vice Principal) Tom Dowsing (Vice Principal)
Exams officer	Adrene Henley
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Sarah Farn (SENCO), Fiona Oliver (SENCO), Enid Ibrahim Louise Orton
Other staff (if applicable)	Sam Mayes (Office Manager), Shane Richards (Network Manager), Paul Pierce (LWLAT Technical Systems Manager), David Goulding (LWLAT Chief Operating Officer)

This plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that contingency planning at Babington Academy is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the examination/assessment process.

By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on processes at Babington Academy.

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', 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 details how Babington Academy complies with the JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (5.3 *Centre management*) by having 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

The centre **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.

The centre **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.

The centre **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. (GR 3.17-19)

Operating across more than one centre

Babington Academy only operates across one centre. Hence this does not apply to this centre.

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

The head of centre will ensure that the centre 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. (GR 5.3)

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 in accordance with the centre's written escalation process.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process

1. Exams 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 post-results services

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- temporarily direct an SLT member (Ed Herbert - Vice Principal) to assume responsibility for all aspects of the examination process supported by members of the central trust data team as required: ACTION: Head of Centre
- temporarily direct an SLT members (Kim Watts, James Southall, Asha Vivekanand and Ben Connell – Assistant Principals) to back cover additional Vice Principal roles, as appropriate, thus freeing up the Vice Principal to manage examinations process
- seek support and guidance from other exams officers at others centres within the Trust. ACTION: Vice Principal
- allocate or appoint additional support staff to the exams team as appropriate. ACTION: Head of Centre
- appoint Lead Invigilator(s) to liaise and support the centre with daily exams routines. ACTION: Vice Principal
- use the detailed systems/policies/procedures in place to support daily exam routines. ACTION All staff

N.B. The centre benefits from having an Exams Officer and Exam Assistant and, in the first instance, if an Exams Officer was absent, their colleague(s) would take on their responsibilities re. examinations, whilst their Line Managers for their other responsibilities would take over that role.

N.N.B. If an Exams Officer were to be unexpectedly absent on the day of an exam, as per the academy absence policy, they should notify the Head of School and their Line Manager of their absence between 7.30am and 8am so that cover could be arranged, as per the flow chart below.

Please see Flow chart attached as an appendix to demonstrate internal cover of Exams Officers at Babington.



2. SENCo (or equivalent role) **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 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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- temporarily appoint the Access Arrangement Assessor (Enid Ibrahim) to assume overall responsibility for the tasks listed above ACTION: Head of Centre
- temporarily seek additional support for the Learning Support team from the Qualified Assessor ACTION: Head of Centre
- Direct Teaching Assistants to support the Exam Officer, SLT line manager of exams and SENCo ACTION: Head of Centre
- identify candidates where applications for access arrangements need to be made or have been made and make arrangements for testing, applications and/or servicing of approved access arrangement during an exams ACTION: Exams Officer
- if necessary, employ outside agencies/professionals to assist in the access arrangement processes ACTION: Head of Centre

3. Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of 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 assessment 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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Direct the Head of Faculty and/or Subject Leader to assume responsibility for the key tasks on behalf of the member of teaching staff absent ACTION: Head of Centre
- If necessary, employ suitable supply/temporary staff to cover staff absence in the short term ensuring the required assessment tasks are completed ACTION: Head of Centre

- Seek support from other middle leaders within the Trust delivering the same subject, if required

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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year and after making exam entries ensure that sufficient invigilators are recruited (with the aid of the Operations Manager) and trained to meet expected ratios ACTION: Exams Officer
- Publish the exams timetable in good time and secure commitment, from the invigilation team, to be available on peak exam days ACTION: Exams Officer
- Make trained school staff available for invigilation duties at short notice, in an emergency situation ACTION: Exams Officers to ensure training is in place (in advance of exam season) and coordinate requirements with Operations manager, Office manager and Head of Centre

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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

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 site(s) details:

A. Reorganising classrooms into exam venues - e.g. the whole of the mobile block (13 classrooms) usually used for English, Science and MAthematics classes;

B. The suite of classrooms in the blue and orange zones of the school (14 classrooms); Neighbouring schools (Beaumont Leys High School) or other schools within our MAT with available facilities (Lancaster Academy, South Wigston High school);

C. Local leisure centre and/or community halls with suitable facilities (Beaumont Leys Leisure Centre, Beaumont Leys Library)

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

Communication details:

- Students/Parents e-mailed information via Reach More Parents
- Text messages sent to parents
- Information published on school web-site and social media networks
- Telephone calls made by office team and/or Assistant Head of Years to all parents/pupils if possible
- 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

Other centre actions: No other criteria identified

6. Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- Ensure all staff have suitable cyber-security training through SchoolPro
- Ensure good cyber security measures across all school platforms including use of Muti-factor Authentication and training on suitable passwords
- direct the Exams Officer to seek support from the academy network manager, LwLAT Technical Systems Manager and LwLAT Chief Operating Officer)
- direct the Exams Officer to seek advice and guidance from awarding bodies when determining appropriate solutions
- seek additional support and/or use of facilities at other Trust schools to ensure mitigation against the impact of any disruption
- enact the actions in the trust 'Risk Protection Arrangement Cyber Response Plan'

7. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work
- MIS/IT system failure at final entry deadline
- MIS/IT system failure during exams preparation
- MIS/IT system failure at results release time

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- direct the Exams Officer to seek support from the academy network manager, LwLAT Technical Systems Manager and LwLAT Chief Operating Officer)
- direct the Exams Officer to seek advice and guidance from awarding bodies when determining appropriate solutions
- seek additional support and/or use of facilities at other Trust schools to ensure mitigation against the impact of any disruption
- enact the actions in the trust 'Risk Protection Arrangement Cyber Response Plan'
- Regarding entries - make entries from another Trust site direct to the awarding bodies (using awarding bodies' secure extranet sites) ACTION: Exams Officer
- Regarding exams preparation: Compile exam room scheduling/timetables using alternative methods (alternative software/manual bookings and timetables ACTION: Exams Officer and SLT Line Manager
- Regarding results: Access results directly from the awarding bodies' secure extranet site (accessed from an alternative site if necessary) ACTION: Exams Officer and SLT Line Manager

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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

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 procedure)
- 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

Other centre actions: No other criteria identified

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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

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:
    - SLT will liaise with parents and pupils about arrangements
    - Parents/Pupils e-mailed information via Reach More Parents and/or a letter posted
    - Text messages sent out to parents
    - Information published on school web-site and social media sites

- 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: No other actions identified

10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations - 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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations (referencing the JCQ document *Preparing for disruption to examinations*)
- 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:

- SLT will liaise with parents and pupils about arrangements
- Parents/Pupils e-mailed information via Reach More Parents and/or a letter posted
- Text messages sent out to parents
- Information published on school web-site and social media sites
- Telephone calls made by Office Team and Assistant Head of Year to all parents/pupils if possible.

- 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

Other centre actions: No other actions identified

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 unforseen emergency)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations
- 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 (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)
- 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

A. Alternative site(s) details:

- Neighbouring schools (Beaumont Leys High School) or other schools within our MAT with available facilities (Lancaster Academy, South Wigston High school);
- Local leisure centre and/or community halls with suitable facilities (Beaumont Leys Leisure Centre, Beaumont Leys Library)

B. Communication details:
   - Students / Parents e-mailed information via Reach More Parents
   - Text messages sent to parents
   - Information published on school web-site and social media networks
   - Telephone calls made by office team and/or Student Welfare Officers to all parents/pupils if possible

- 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

Other centre actions: No other actions identified

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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

The centre will:

- 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

Other centre actions: No other actions identified

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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

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 organisations arrange collections, seek advice from the relevant awarding organisations and will not make its own arrangements for transportation unless told to do so by the awarding organisation
- for any examinations where the centre makes its own arrangements for transportation, investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*
- ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until as close to the collection time as possible

Other centre actions: No other actions identified

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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

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

Other centre actions: No other actions identified

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

Other criteria: No other criteria identified

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 site(s) details:
  - Neighbouring schools (Beaumont Leys High School) or other schools within our MAT with available facilities (Lancaster Academy, South Wigston High school);
  - Local leisure centre and/or community halls with suitable facilities (Beaumont Leys Leisure Centre, Beaumont Leys Library)

- 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:
  - Students/Parents e-mailed information, text messages sent to parents, information published on school web-site and social media networks, telephone calls made by office team and/or assistant Head of Year to all parents/pupils if possible

Other centre actions: No other actions identified

16. Any other cause of disruption to the exam process

Cause of disruption

- Government cancellation of central examinations

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above

- Year 11 students will sit mock exams in exam conditions before their formal exams in November and March, and their papers are retained by class teachers.
- Mocks are marked by subject teachers and the marking benefits from calendared standardisation and moderation meetings.
- By doing this, the academy ensures we have alternative evidence of student performance to enable alternative methods of awarding grades, such as Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs).
- Each subject also has clearly written assessment plans based on their course's programme of study and student attainment data is inputted centrally according to a clear data schedule, for secure student attainment record keeping.

- Subject Leaders will provide information as directed by the Senior Leadership Team based on guidance taken from the examination boards for each subject.

17. Succession Planning

To minimise the risk of maladministration and to ensure business continuity, Babington Academy maintains a clear succession plan for key exams staff. In the first instance, we employ both an Exams Officer and an Exams Assistant and the Exams Assistant completes the same training and reading as the Exams Officer and so is in a good position to cover the Exams Officer in the event of absence. Further, we employ two SENCOs, both of whom have the proper training and inherent understanding of the exams processes. Finally, our Assessor works in close conjunction with our Access Arrangements Administrator and we provide an additional member of staff to support the delivery of Access Arrangements through both mock and certified exam series building clear resilience into the delivery of exams for students with Access Arrangements.

In the absence of the Examinations Officer, SENCO or Access Arrangements Administrator at any critical stage of the examination cycle, an established colleague is fully briefed and authorised to take charge of all examination administration duties relevant to the specific role.

The Exams Folder, with its documented processes and procedures, will be used to ensure a seamless transition of responsibilities

Changes 2026-27

1. Changed subjects taught in mobiles from English, Science and Business to English, Science and Maths
2. Added bullet points about Multi-Factor Authentication and passport training as actions to mitigate a cyber-security threat.

Changes 2025/2026

1. Addition of section 17 – Succession planning
2. Update of named individuals to reflect changes in job roles and SLT
3. Replacement of reference to Weduc with reference to Reach More Parents

Changes 2024/2025

1. (Changed) Document name changed to **Contingency Plan**.
2. (Changed) Any reference to ALS Lead/SENCo changed to SENCo (or equivalent role).
3. (Removed) Under heading **Purpose of the plan**: 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, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered.
4. (Added) A new sub-heading under **Purpose of the plan**: **Contingency arrangements** and added a new field containing associated text taken from *General Regulations for Approved Centres* (3.17-19).
5. (Changed) The content of the text under the heading **National Centre Number Register and other information requirements**:

   (From) The head of centre will also ensure that as a contingency to enable the prompt handling of urgent issues only, responds to the awarding bodies' request for information regarding the contact details of a senior member of staff (which might include a personal mobile number and/or email address). This will ensure that any urgent matters which might adversely affect candidates which arise outside of term time, and which potentially put qualification awards at risk, can be addressed by awarding bodies with the support of that member of staff. Heads of centre should ensure that this member of staff has the necessary authority to mobilise resources to provide this support, which might include resolving issues within the centre itself. (GR 5.3)

   (To) The head of centre will ensure that the centre 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. (GR 5.3)
6. (Added) Under **3. Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle** reference to controlled assessment and coursework.
7. (Changed) Reference changed from 'Alternative venue details' to Alternative site(s) details.
8. (Added) Under **6. Cyber-attack** added a prompt in the insert text field under Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above: (This will include the required arrangements for cyber security – refer to GR 3.21).
9. (Added) Under **7. Failure of IT systems** added a further example of criteria for implementation of the plan: *IT system corruption affecting candidates' work*. Added a prompt in the insert text field under Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above: (This will include the security arrangements put in place which protect candidates' work – refer to GR 3.19).

10. (Added) Under **10. Candidates may not be able to take examinations - centre remains open** additional text to the 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*. New bullet point added under Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above: (focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations...).
11. (Added) Under point **11. Centre may not be able to open as normal during the examination period** new bullet point under Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above: (focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations).
12. (Changed) point **13** title (From) **Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts** (To) **Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination script**s.
13. (Updated) Under the heading below **Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning**, relevant links and information has been updated and outdated links/information removed.

Centre-specific changes

Changes re. Exam officer - Adrene Henley.

Changes re. contingency measures due to Head of Centre/Exams Officer absence, whereby Ed Herbert (Assistant Principal) will now be delegated responsibility, as opposed to Nancy Carnell.

Changes re. Mock exams, now only taken in November.

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

Ofqual guidance extract taken directly from the **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted** 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

"This document was updated in October 2023 to include Ofqual's final decisions on long-term resilience arrangements, and the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance for education settings with confirmed reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC).

In addition to this guidance, you will need to be aware of your specific responsibilities for local and national school preparations and contingencies. You should also follow advice from relevant public health bodies.

Contingency planning

Awarding organisations are required to establish, maintain and comply with an up-to-date detailed written contingency plan, to mitigate any incident they have identified may occur. This includes having communication plans for external parties (Ofqual General Condition of Recognition A6). Schools and colleges should also be prepared for possible disruption to exams and assessments and make sure staff are aware of these plans.

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

You may also wish to see the 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 your 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.

Schools, colleges and other exam centres must speak to the relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible if they are expecting any disruption that might affect the sitting of exams and assessments.

In the event of disruption

- Contact the relevant awarding organisation and follow its instructions.
- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether your centre is able to open.
- 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.
- Where accommodation is limited, prioritise students whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
- In the event of an evacuation during an examination please refer to JCQ's Centre emergency evacuation procedure
- Communicate with students, parents and carers any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
- Communicate with any external assessors, invigilators or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

After the exam

- Consider whether any students' ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment has been materially affected and, if so, apply to the relevant awarding organisation for special consideration.
- Advise students, where appropriate, of the opportunities to take their exam or assessment at a later date.
- Ensure that scripts are stored under secure conditions.
- 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

- Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
- 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 are able to 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, depending on their specific policies.

See also JCQ's guidance on special consideration

Wider communications

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

The DfE in England, the DfE 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 or 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"

JCQ

JCQ guidance taken directly from Instructions for conducting examinations 2024-2025 section 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: 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 althernative 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* - www.gov.uk/government/publications/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 that there is 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 was agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the re-scheduling 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. However, the awarding bodies will not insist upon candidates being available throughout the entire timetable period as a matter of course."

Links to other JCQ documentation

JCQ Joint Contingency Plan

JCQ Preparing for disruption to examinations

General Regulations for Approved Centres

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements

Guidance notes for transferred candidates

Instructions for conducting examinations

A guide to the special consideration process

Guidance for centres on cyber security

Information for centres affected by RAAC – the delivery of non-examination assessments and the special consideration process

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

GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption

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

Wales

School closures: examinations

Opening schools in extremely bad weatherand extreme hot weather

Northern Ireland

Exceptional closure days - Northern Ireland

Checklist - exceptional closure of schools

National Cyber Security Centre

Cyber Security for Schools
Cyber security training for school staff