



Exam Contingency Plan

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Version number	Date Approved	Change/Reasons for Change/Comments
1	25 April 2016	
2	12 March 2018	Policy name changed from 'Conduct of External Examinations Policy' and regulation updates
3	2019	6 May 2019 Regulation updates
4	24.05.21	Minor changes

Distribution list
Governors
Head
Leadership Team



Exam Contingency Plan

The purpose of this plan is to examine potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Oathall Community College. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed in case of disruption, it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by 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 in the event of widespread disruption to the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- This plan also confirms Oathall Community College is compliant with the JCQ regulation (section 5.3, General Regulations for Approved Centres) that the centre has in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or staff absence. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process:

I. Exam officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

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

Entries

- Awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff



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

Results and post-results

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- The Line Manager for the Exams Officer to manage entries, pre/post-exam administration alongside relevant parties; Business Manager, Heads of House, Faculty Leaders, SENCO, Invigilators and Site Team.
- Seeking/following awarding body guidance/instructions
- Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance
- Communicating with parents/carers and students via the school's parent e-mail system and the school website and keeping them informed regarding solutions to the disruption

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



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Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

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

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

Recommended Actions

- Deputy SENCO to liaise with Exams Officer over SENCO absence.
- Seeking/following awarding body guidance/instructions
- Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance
- Communicating with parents/carers and students via the school's parent e-mail system and the school website and keeping them informed regarding solutions to the disruption

3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time resulting in:
 - Candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late



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- Late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines
- Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled
- Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of centre's marking

Recommended actions

- Line Manager and Exams Officer to liaise with remaining teaching staff.
- Seeking/following awarding body guidance/instructions
- Invoking actions as detailed in statutory guidance
- Communicating with parents/carers and students via the school's parent e-mail system and the school website and keeping them informed regarding solutions to the disruption

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

Recommended Actions

- Recruitment and training is done well in advance
- Exams Officer to cover absences or shortages, although Oathall Community College's policy is not to work to the minimum ratio requirements.
- Re-allocation of invigilators/facilitators using trained members of staff

5. Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan



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

Recommended Actions

- In an emergency the Albemarle, Assembly Hall, Drama/Dance Studio, Canteen and Offices could be utilised for examination purposes
- Communicating with students via the school's parent e-mailing system and keeping them informed regarding solutions to the disruption
- Seeking/following awarding body's guidance/instructions
- Applying for alternative site arrangements

6. Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Recommended actions

- Exams Officer and IT Technician to liaise with Examination Boards as to appropriate action

7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- On hearing the lockdown bell (one long ring for one minute) or the emergency evacuation alarm (a continuous high-pitched tone) during an examination

Recommended actions

- Invigilators to follow the Lockdown/Emergency Evacuation procedures displayed in the exam room
- Seeking/following awarding body guidance/instructions

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan



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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

Recommended actions

- Communicating with students via the school's parent e-mailing system and keep them informed regarding solutions to the disruption
- Invoking actions as detailed in the colleges 'Remote Learning Plan'
- Seeking/following awarding bodies guidance/instructions

9. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Candidates are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations as normal.

Recommended Actions

Oathall Community College will:

- Liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding bodies
- Offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- Apply to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. If a candidate chooses not to sit an examination for other reasons, they should be aware that special consideration rules will not apply. JCQ guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the JCQ website: www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-andguidance



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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Oathall Community College is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.

Recommended Actions

- The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the Headteacher under the centre's general planning for emergencies
- The Headteacher is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies when deciding whether the centre is able to open
- Communicating with students via the school's parent e-mailing system and keep them informed regarding solutions to the disruption
- Oathall Community College will inform each awarding bodies with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible and liaise regarding suitable alternative venues
- Consult the DFE guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather available on the Department for Education website:
[www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/emergencyplanning/a0069425/advice-onsevere- weather](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/emergencyplanning/a0069425/advice-onsevere-weather)

11. Disruption to the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to Oathall Community College in advance of examinations.

Recommended Actions

- Awarding bodies will provide electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network
- The Exams Officer will ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions
- As a last resort, and in close collaboration with the centre and regulators, awarding bodies to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date



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12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Recommended actions

- Where examinations are part of the 'yellow label' service advice should be sought from awarding bodies. No arrangements for transportation will be made without approval from awarding bodies
- Where centre arrangements are made for transportation, alternative dispatch options should be investigated in conjunction with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Exams
- Examination papers/assessment evidence will be stored securely until collection

13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Recommended Actions

- Seeking/following awarding body guidance/instructions
- Awarding bodies to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding bodies
- Where marks can not be generated by awarding bodies candidates may need to retake affected assessment at a subsequent assessment series

14. Oathall Community College is unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

Criteria for implementation of plan

Oathall Community College is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates or to facilitate post results services.



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Recommended Actions

Oathall Community College will contact awarding bodies about alternative options which may be:

- Make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site
- Make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site
- Share facilities with other local centres
- Communicate with parents/carers and students via the school's parent e-mailing system to keep them informed regarding solutions

15. Widespread local/national disruption to examinations

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Examinations are disrupted due to a local/national emergency

Recommended Actions

Oathall Community College will:

- inform parents/carers and students in advance of the exam series of the need to be available up to and including the exam contingency day
- take advice/instructions from relevant local and national agencies and awarding bodies.
- post information on the College website
- communicate with parents/carers and students to keep them informed regarding solutions to the disruption
- keep confidential question papers and exam materials secure
- further to guidance received, SLT, site team and Exams Officer will make alternative arrangements to deliver examinations
- open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible
- use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding bodies (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible)
- offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- apply to awarding bodies for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements

16. Disruption to examinations in a pandemic

Criteria for implementation of the plan

The preparation of students for examinations or the implementation of examinations is disrupted due to a pandemic



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Recommended Actions

Oathall Community College will:

- put into action the required section/s of the Exam Contingency Plan to mitigate against the impact of the disruption caused by a pandemic
- communicate with parents/carers and students to keep them informed regarding solutions to the disruption
- follow guidance from the DfE, Ofqual, JCQ and awarding bodies



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17. Further guidance to inform procedures and implement contingency planning

GOV.UK

The [Department for Education](#) in England, 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.

1.1 Covid specific guidance:

- [Guidance for schools Covid-19](#) from the Department for Education in England (subject to frequent updates as the situation changes)

1.2 General contingency guidance

- www.gov.uk/guidance/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings Emergency planning and response: Severe weather; Exam disruption
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-organisation-maintained-schools Opening and closing local-authority-maintained schools
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service> Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Ensuring the service runs smoothly
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publication/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-northern-ireland> The awarding bodies will designate a 'contingency day' for examinations. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland: The designation of a 'contingency day' within the common examination timetable is in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations.

OFQUAL

The regulators, [Ofqual](#) in England, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

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



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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 (updated 01 October 2020)

National Counter Terrorism Security Office

- www.gov.uk/government/publications/bomb-threats-guidance/procedures-for-handling-bomb-threats Procedures for handling bomb threats

JCQ

The qualification regulators, JCQ 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.

- www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents JCQ Joint Contingency Plan
- www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations General Regulations for Approved Centres
- www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms 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/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations Instructions for Conducting Examinations
- www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance A guide to the special consideration process
- [Centre emergency evacuation procedure](#) Evacuation during an examination