

## Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at Heart of England. 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** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the **JCQ notice Preparing for disruption to examinations** (effective from 11 October 2021).

This plan also confirms Heart of England's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) 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	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
<b>Timetabling</b>			
Exams clash with other activities	Establish provisional exam timetables for candidates as soon as they are published by awarding bodies	Complete the exams column on the school calendar.	Exams & Data Manager SLT
Exam clashes	Make appropriate supervision arrangements in the spring term.	Advise candidates in writing of the arrangements.	Exams & Data Manager HAT/Invigilation Team
Extreme weather	Ensure Site Team and SLT take public examinations into account when deciding on school closures. Mock examinations would be rearranged.	Where possible local candidates will be able to sit external examinations, if local invigilators can get in. Notify Awarding Organisations.	Site Team SLT Exams & Data Manager Invigilators

	Exams & Data Manager to be able to contact Invigilators at home. Snowline	Consider moving the start time. Consider Special Consideration	
Access Arrangements not provided.	Students identified as needing AA should be tested at the start of KS4.	SENDCo to arrange testing and apply for AA. Then liaise with Exams and Data Manager to provide readers/scribes for examinations as required.	SENDCo Exams & Data Manager

Possible causes of disruption	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
<b>Extended Absence of Exams and Data Manager During Planning Stage</b>			
Annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and specifications being delivered.	Collect the information from Curriculum Leaders in the summer term prior to teaching starting.	Keep an up to date database of qualifications being offered. Post 16 qualifications must be updated on Post 16 course directory	Exams & Data Manager Data Assistant CLs and VP
Sufficient Invigilators not recruited and trained.	Invigilators should be recruited and in place for Y11 mocks. IMA to be trained how to timetable invigilators	Mock timetable to be finalised before October half term to ensure enough invigilators. Cover Manager will employ agency	Exams & Data Manager IMA

Estimated entries not done so pre-release materials are not received	Make sure estimated entries are completed before awarding organisation deadlines. IMA to be trained how to do estimated entries	Curriculum Leaders to check estimated entries have been done if no pre-release materials are received. .	Exams & Data Manager IMA Curriculum Leaders
Candidates not entered for external exams/assessments or deadlines missed and penalties incurred.	Initial entries are sent well ahead of deadlines. Aim to have entries finalised end of Autumn term and seating finished end of Spring term.	IMA to be trained how to do exam entries and assist with seating labels. Contact EIMS for assistance. Keep contact details of recently retired Exams Officers.	Vice Principal Exams & Data Manager IMA Curriculum Leaders
Invigilators not trained or updated on changes to ICE.	Use TEO online training where possible. IMA can assist with arrangements for a training session. ISAs can do AA facilitator training during INSET.	Plan a training session for all invigilators before the mocks each year. Any who can't attend face to face should complete TEO.	Exams & Data Manager IMA Invigilators ISAs
Major disruption to teaching in the weeks before exams.	The centre remains responsible to prepare students remotely for examinations. Possibly using alternative method of learning.	Consider moving exam series for modular qualifications.	Vice Principal CLs Exams & Data Manager

Possible causes of disruption	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
<b>Online Examinations</b>			
IT system unavailable on day of examination.	Download tasks ahead of scheduled examination date where permitted.	Book IT equipment well ahead and download tasks before scheduled date of examination if permitted.	Exams & Data Manager Curriculum Leaders Network Manager Operations Manager
Candidates unable to access task details.	Test secure access rights ahead of schedule every year and every session	Ensure teaching staff have access rights for correct area of awarding organisation secure extranet sites ahead of time. Have technical assistance for all online examinations.	Subject Teachers Exams & Data Manager Network Manager
Cyber-attack Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery or results	Constant review of risks and weak points in security measures Increasing staff awareness of data security through training Results can be accessed from awarding body websites and printed	Containment may include isolating/closing a compromised section of the network Attempt to recover any losses and limit the damage Identify any affected data and notify organisations as appropriate Back up SIMS data base as per schedule Keep network security up to date Ensure the Exams & Data Manager has access to awarding body sites from home.	Data Protection Officer Network Manager Exams & Data Manager

Possible causes of disruption	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
<b>Absence</b>			
Candidates absent for all or part of assessment (various reasons)	Give candidates access to examination timetables well in advance.	Notify awarding organisations and claim special consideration where appropriate. Send registers to office once the examination has started so absent students can be contacted.	Exams & Data Manager Absence Officer Pastoral Managers
Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations – centre remains open	Good communication with the bus company	Consider moving the start time. If possible allow candidates to sit the exam. Ensure Invigilators are aware of the rules for very late arrivals (JCQ ICE) Notify awarding organisations and claim special consideration where appropriate.	Exams & Data Manager Absence Officer Pastoral Managers
Candidates late for examination i.e. transport issues	Good communication with the bus company	Consider delaying the start time depending on number of candidates involved. Ensure invigilators are aware of the rules for very late arrivals (JCQ ICE)	Exams & Data Manager Absence Officer Pastoral Managers
Exams and Data Manager absent on exam day	Contact list to be kept at Exam & Data Manager's house.	Notify Operations Manager and Lead Invigilator. Secure storage can be opened by Site Manager and spare safe key is kept by HoC. Lead Invigilator knows the layout.	Exams & Data Manager Operations Manager Lead Invigilator / IMA HoC, Site Manager

SENDCo extended absence	<p>Aim to have assessments completed in Summer term of Y9.</p> <p>Both SENDCo and Exams &amp; Data Manager to have access to online arrangements.</p>	Contact LA for assistance with testing.	<p>Assistant Vice Principal Exams &amp; Data Manager SENDCo</p>
Invigilator absence	Book Invigilators well in advance to be sure they are available. Book 1 extra invigilator each session to act as a runner.	Unplanned absence will be covered by the Operations Manager.	<p>Exams &amp; Data Manager Operations Manager</p>

	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
<b>During the Examination</b>			
Wrong paper is given to candidates.	Seat candidates in order and print out seating plans and registers in advance of the start of the examination series.	Lead Invigilator to check papers on desks, Exams & Data Manager to ask candidates to check they have the right paper at the start of the examination. If the candidate completes the wrong paper amend the entries. Advise the awarding organisation and if appropriate apply for special consideration.	Exams & Data Manager Lead Invigilator
Not all invigilators arrive.	Book invigilators well in advance.	If possible call in additional invigilators if no more are available the Operations Manager will arrange cover.	Exams & Data Manager Operations Manager
Candidates are not given extra time.	Show AA on seating plans and highlight extra time candidates.	Put an extra time card on the desk so invigilators know who has extra time. If a candidate is refused in error contact awarding organisation and apply for special consideration if appropriate.	Invigilators Exams & Data Manager
Alarm is activated during an exam.	Invigilator Training session to include showing the panels in main block for M1 and PE reception for SH.	Stop exam. Find out where alarm has been activated, do not evacuate if not in the same block. Keep candidates under exam conditions await further instructions from Site	Exams & Data Manager Site Manager, SLT Lead Invigilator

		Manager/Exams & Data Manager/SLT. Restart exam if possible allowing full time.	
Possible causes of disruption	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
<b>Security of materials</b>			
Exam papers/answer books not kept secure before assessment	Make sure there is sufficient space in the secure cupboard well in advance of the summer examination series. Brief office staff of the security arrangements including the log.	2 people to check papers before they are opened. If a mistake is made collect the papers, return to secure storage and advise the awarding organisation immediately.	Exams & Data Manager Lead Invigilator Office Staff
Candidates' work not kept secure after assessment or dispatched on time.	Book yellow label pick up in advance. Have space to store afternoon scripts overnight in the safe.	Lead Invigilators to ensure all scripts are either dispatched or returned to the safe after each exam session. Complete the yellow label dispatch log.	Exams & Data Manager Lead Invigilators Office Staff
Disruption to transporting completed scripts	Have contact details for yellow label collections and book slot in advance.	Take parcels to Post Office. Store in safe and contact the awarding body for further advice.	Exams & Data Manager
<b>Controlled Assessment / NEA</b>			
Deadlines not met by candidates	Ensure all candidates are briefed on deadlines/penalties for not meeting them	Mark what candidates have produced by deadline and seek guidance from awarding organisation on further action.	Subject Teachers Curriculum Leaders



Deadlines for marking and/or paperwork not met by teaching staff	Ensure teaching staff are given clear deadlines (prior to awarding organisation ones) to complete marking/paperwork so the exams office can process and send off marks ahead of AO deadlines	Seek guidance from awarding organisation	Curriculum Leaders Exams & Data Manager SLT
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Example risks and issues	Possible remedial action		Staff
	Forward planning	Action	
<b>Accommodation</b>			
Insufficient space in Sports Hall for candidates	Once numbers are known at the start of the year, flag instances where additional space is required.	Use M1/M2 in addition to SH. Make sure we have sufficient desks.	Exams & Data Manager Site Team Operations Manager
Insufficient ICT facilities for all candidates	Careful planning ahead and booking of rooms / ICT facilities	Multiple sittings where necessary if permitted.	Exams & Data Manager Curriculum Leaders Network Manager Operations Manager
Unable to use Sports Hall	N/A	If possible move to M1/M2 and H11/H18 Keep candidates under supervision and seek advice from awarding organisation. Consider Special Consideration	Exams & Data Manager Site Team Operations Manager

Power Failure	N/A	Written exams to be completed if enough natural light. If unable to use ITC facilities contact awarding organisation for guidance. Keep candidates supervised and delay the start time if the exam hasn't started. Consider Special Consideration	Exams & Data Manager Site Team Network Manager
Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations		Contact awarding bodies for advice. HOC to liaise with outside agencies re safety of opening the centre. Consider moving the start time. Consider re-entering, if not terminal exams.	Exams & Data Manager HOC Site Team
Centre closure due to fire	Purchase fire resistant secure safe for exam papers. Liaise with BCP re emergency exam accommodation.	Contact Awarding Organisations for assistance. Have invigilator contact numbers off site. Contact Phoenix if required for the secure storage.	Principal Exams & Data Manager

Possible causes of disruption	Possible remedial action		Staff
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<b>Results</b>			
Technical problems prevent downloading results on pre-release day	Check SIMS and A2C before pre-release day. Make sure Network Manager has covered both results days.	Contact EIMS if it's a SIMS issue. Contact relevant awarding organisation (s) Contact AVCO for A2C issues Use Exams Officers FB page to contact AO reps urgently	Exams and Data Manager Network Manager
Unable to manage the distribution of results to candidates on results day.	Make sure summer works are planned with Hall access taken into account on results days. Liaise with Site Team.	Contact awarding organisations if unable to distribute results. Use Exams Offices FB page to contact AO reps urgently. Use Insight to distribute results electronically.	Site Team Post 16 Team Exams and Data Manager
Unable to facilitate post results services for candidates.	Liaise with Network Manager to make sure the awarding body secure sites can be accessed. Make sure post result services are published in advance on website and links emailed to all candidates. Check enough subject staff will be in on results day to offer support and guidance to candidates.	Contact awarding organisations if unable to facilitate post results services. Use Exams Offices FB page to contact AO reps urgently. Collect consent forms and payments if relevant and process requests from another site.	HoC Exams and Data Manager Post 16 Team Network Manager Website Manager

## **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.

#### **General contingency guidance**

- [emergency planning and response](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [school organisation: local-authority-maintained schools](#) from the Department for Education in England
- [bomb threats](#) 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 the [JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#).

#### **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 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**

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
3. 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).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on students, standards or public confidence.
5. 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](#), will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders.

The [Department for Education](#) 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**

The governments' view across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is education should continue in 2021 to 2022 with schools remaining open and that examinations and assessments will go ahead in both autumn 2021 and summer 2022.

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 exam timetables.

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

(Ofqual guidance extract above 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** (updated 30 September 2021) <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>)

## JCQ

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 Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.

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

15.5 The awarding bodies will designate contingency days for examinations, summer 2023. This is consistent with the qualification regulators' document *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland*: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

The designation of contingency days 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.

In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2023, 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.

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.

(JCQ guidance above taken directly from **Instructions for Conducting Examinations** 2022-2023 <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](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents)

JCQ Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/)

General Regulations for Approved Centres [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Guidance notes for transferred candidates [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms)

Instructions for conducting examinations [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations](http://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](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

## GOV.UK

Emergency planning and response: Exam disruption [www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings](http://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 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service>

[www.protectuk.police.uk](http://www.protectuk.police.uk)

## National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free [Web Check](#) and [Mail Check](#) services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to **all UK schools**. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the [NCSC website](#).

The Department for Education has been asking centres to review **National Cyber Security Centre advice** following increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections. The NCSC information supports centres in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work.

Ransomware attacks continue and the Department is reminding centres to review the NCSC advice and to take precautions. This includes ensuring that you have backups in place for your key services and data.

For ease of reference, the Department has highlighted key links relating to the NCSC cyber security guidance below:

1. [More ransomware attacks on UK education - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)
2. [Ransomware advice and guidance for your IT teams to implement](#)
3. [Offline backups in an online world](#)
4. [Backing up your data](#)
5. [Practical resources to help improve your cyber security](#)
6. [Building Resilience: Ransomware and the risks to schools and ways to prevent it](#)

[School staff offered training to help shore up cyber defences - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)