

Presdales School



'Achievement for All'

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The purpose of this exams policy is:

- to ensure the planning and management of exams is conducted efficiently and in the best interests of candidates.
- to ensure the operation of an efficient exams system with clear guidelines for all relevant staff.
- Ensure compliance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations and awarding body guidelines.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the centre's exam processes to read, understand and implement this policy.

The exams policy will be reviewed every year by the Head of Centre and the Examinations Officer.

1. Examinations responsibilities

The Head of Centre:

- has overall responsibility for the school as an examinations centre.
- understands the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to current JCQ documents.
- ensures that relevant members of staff respond promptly to requests for information from awarding bodies relating to the administration and conducting of examinations/assessments
- is responsible for reporting all suspected or actual incidents of malpractice - refer to the JCQ document Suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments.
- Is responsible, together with the Examinations Officer and/or SLT members, for investigating all cases of malpractice.
- Is responsible for developing and maintaining a comprehensive cyber security policy for the centre

Examinations Officer¹:

- manages the administration of internal and external examinations.
- advises the senior leadership team, subject and class tutors, and other relevant support staff on annual examinations timetables and procedures as set by the various awarding bodies.
- ensures that candidates are informed of and understand those aspects of the examinations timetable, as well as the JCQ regulations, through issuing documentation and arranging briefings for year groups of students.
- checks with teaching staff that the necessary coursework and/or controlled assessments are completed on time and in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- provides and confirms detailed data on estimated entries.
- maintains systems and processes to support the timely entry of candidates for their examinations.
- produces a timetable of exams along with rooming and invigilation arrangements.
- receives, checks and stores securely all examination papers and completed scripts and ensures that scripts are dispatched as per the guidelines.
- liaises with the SENCo to ensure access arrangements are made in compliance with JCQ requirements.
- identifies and manages examination timetable clashes.
- accounts for income and expenditures relating to all examination costs/charges.
- manages the recruitment, training, and monitoring of a team of invigilators responsible for the conduct of examinations.
- ensures candidates' coursework / controlled assessment and marks are submitted by subject staff and any other material required by the appropriate awarding bodies correctly and on schedule.
- arranges for dissemination of examination results and certificates to candidates
- manages requests for EARs and ATS, and disseminates outcomes
- Identifies and logs any conflicts of interest for school staff and report to relevant exam boards as appropriate.

Heads of department:

- guidance of candidates who are unsure about examinations entries or amendments to entries.

¹ This is the individual to whom the Head of Centre has delegated responsibility for the administration of examinations in their centre.

- accurate completion of estimated entry information, final entry and all other mark sheets and adherence to deadlines as set by the Examinations Officer.
- accurate completion and despatch of coursework / controlled assessment mark sheets and declaration sheets.
- decisions on post-results procedures.

Teachers:

- supplying information on entries, coursework and controlled assessments as required by the head of department and/or Examinations Officer.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator:

- identification and testing of candidates' requirements for access arrangements and notifying the Examinations Officer in good time so that they are able to put in place examination day arrangements.
- Informs relevant candidates that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access Arrangements Online (AAO)*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Ensures suitability of access arrangements/facilities
- process any necessary applications in order to gain approval (if required)
- maintains records.
- working with the Examinations Officer to provide the access arrangements required by candidates in examination rooms.

Network Manager (supported by ICT Technician)

- creating examination condition log-ins for each student for every paper to be sat
- Download software for online examinations and prepare ICT rooms
- Prepare rooms for GCSE MFL listening examinations
- Support/ upload other examinations using ICT
- Being available at the start of the examination period to ensure all students and invigilators have followed the log on procedures and are able to print off scripts

Invigilators:

- Attendance at training events
- Assisting the Examinations Officer in the efficient and calm running of examinations according to JCQ regulations.
- Assisting with the setting up of the rooms according to prepared seating plans
- Collection of examination papers and other material from the examinations office before the start of the examination
- Double checking the correct examination papers have been given out and completing the JCQ "second pair of eyes" check form.
- Supervision of the candidates
- Collection of all exam papers in the correct order at the end of the examination and ensuring their return to the examinations office.
- Understanding the JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations and ensuring examinations are conducted accordingly
- Printing examination scripts for candidates who have word processed their scripts

Candidates:

- Checking examination entries, personal information and timetables, notifying the Examinations Officer of any errors or exam clashes.

- Ensuring they have an up to date copy of their personal timetable
- understanding coursework / controlled assessment regulations and signing a declaration that authenticates the coursework as their own.
- ensuring they conduct themselves in all examinations according to the JCQ regulations

Failure to check personal details could result in certificates being printed incorrectly. The cost of replacement certificates will have to be met by the candidate.

2. **Qualifications offered**

The qualifications offered at this centre are decided by the Headteacher, SLT and Departmental Heads.

The types of qualifications offered are GCSE, GCE AS/A2 & Level 1 / 2 BTEC Tech Awards

The subjects offered for these qualifications in any academic year may be found in the school's prospectus. Informing the examinations office of changes to a specification is the responsibility of the Head of Department.

Decisions on whether a candidate should be entered for a particular subject will be taken by subject teachers in consultation with the pastoral and SLT staff.

3. **Examination series and timetables.**

External examinations are scheduled in May /June, with some GCSE re-sits in November and some BTEC exams in January/February. The Examinations Officer will circulate the timetables for these examinations once the entries have been finalised and any clash arrangements processed.

Internal examinations which are under external examination conditions are held during the academic year. The dates are included in the school calendar.

4. **Entries, entry details and late entries**

Heads of department will provide estimated entry information to the Examinations Officer to meet JCQ and awarding body deadlines. It is the responsibility of heads of department to check all entries, specification codes and details are correct.

The centre only accepts entries from private candidates under exceptional circumstances.

Entries and amendments made after an awarding organisation's deadline (i.e. late) require the authorisation, in writing, of the head of department. Departments or students wishing to make a late entry or amendments will incur the penalty charge incurred.

Re-Sit Entries

Former students may request to return to Presales to re-sit A Level qualifications at their own cost. The decision as to whether or not we can accommodate these requests will depend on whether there is a NEA/Coursework component of the qualification in question. GCSE Maths and English Language re-sits are compulsory for any students that have joined Presdales sixth form with a grade 3 or below in either subject. The school covers the cost for any compulsory resits.

5. Examination fees

Registration and entry fees will be paid for by the centre. Re-sit fees will be paid for by the student, with the exception of those re-sitting GCSE Maths or English Language for the first time.

Candidates or departments will not be charged for changes of tier or the withdrawal of candidates provided these are made within the specified timescale of the relevant awarding body. Re-sit students will not be refunded for withdrawals after the amendment date. Late entry fees or amendments will be paid for by the student or the department depending on the circumstances.

The Examinations Officer will advise teaching staff of the deadline for actions well in advance for each series.

Fee reimbursements are sought from candidates:

- if they fail to sit an exam;
- if they do not meet the necessary coursework requirements without medical evidence or evidence of other mitigating circumstances

6. Equality legislation and access arrangements

All examination centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

The centre will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that they provide to candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the SENCo and Examinations Officer.

Access arrangements

The SENCo is responsible for: -

Informing subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/examinations.

Determining a candidates Exam Access Arrangements in conjunction with other Specialist Teachers as recognised by JCQ).

Ensuring the qualifications of the Specialist Assessor are up to date and that a current certificate is held on file.

Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangements

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies

Determining appropriate Rooming for access arrangement candidates in conjunction with the Exams Officer and Cover Supervisor.

Ensuring that Invigilators who are providing support to candidates with access arrangement have received the necessary information and training to ensure they are giving the correct amount of support whilst adhering to JCQ regulations.

7. Managing invigilators

External staff will be used to invigilate external examinations.

Invigilators are recruited, timetabled, trained, and briefed by the Examinations Officer

Securing the necessary Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) clearance for new invigilators is the responsibility of the Business Manager. DBS fees for securing such clearance are paid by the centre.

Invigilators' rates of pay are set by the Business Manager.

Conflicts of interest are checked by the Examinations Officer prior to exams to ensure JCQ requirements are met.

8. Examination days

The exams officer will produce an examination timetable which will be shared with all school staff and invigilators. Examination rooms will be booked following liaison with the cover manager

Site management staff are responsible for setting up the Hall and Gym, and will be advised of requirements in advance by the Exams Officer. Other rooms will be set up by invigilation staff and the Examinations Officer/Exams Assistant.

The Examinations Officer/Exams Administrator or invigilator will start and finish all examinations in accordance with JCQ and exam board guidelines. Heads of Year may also be asked to support getting students into exam venues. Any teaching staff present must be in accordance with the rules defined by JCQ concerning who is allowed in the room and what they can do.

In practical exams, subject teachers' availability will be in accordance with JCQ and exam board guidelines.

Examination papers must not be read by invigilators or subject teachers and cannot be removed from the exam room before the end of a session. Papers will be distributed to heads of department in accordance with JCQ's recommendations and no later than twenty-four hours after candidates have completed them.

After an examination, the Examinations Officer together with invigilators will arrange for the safe dispatch of completed scripts to awarding bodies.

9. Candidates

The Examinations Officer will provide written information to candidates in advance of each examination series. A formal briefing session for candidates will be given by the Examinations Officer and/or year heads.

The centre's published rules on acceptable dress and behaviour apply at all times. Candidates' personal belongings remain their own responsibility and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage.

In an examination room a candidate must not have access to items other than those clearly allowed in the instructions on the question paper, the stationery list, or the specification for that subject. This is particularly true of mobile phones and other electronic communication or storage devices with text or digital facilities. Any precluded items must not be taken into an examination room. No food will be allowed in the exam room. Still water will be allowed in a clear bottle with any labels removed.

Disruptive candidates are dealt with in accordance with JCQ guidelines. Candidates are expected to stay for the full examination time.

Note: candidates who leave an examination room during an exam with the intent on returning, for example to go to the toilet, must be accompanied by an appropriate member of staff at all times. If a student leaves the exam room unaccompanied, they will not be allowed to return to the exam room to complete their exam.

The Examinations Officer /Head of Year or KS4 Pastoral Head is responsible for handling late or absent candidates on examination day. Candidates who arrive late for their exam will be allowed to sit their exam wherever possible.

Identifying candidates

Heads of year, form Tutors or a member of SLT will be available before the start of each examination to assist in the identification of students. All students will also be issued with a Photo Exam ID which will be placed on their desk for each exam.

Clash candidates

The Examinations Officer will be responsible as necessary for organising supervising escorts, identifying a secure venue and arranging overnight supervision. Overnight supervision arrangements will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Separate Invigilation

Where a candidate has the relevant authorised Access Arrangements to require separate invigilation, the Examinations Officer will organise a separate room and lone invigilator to ensure JCQ requirements are met – including a roaming invigilator.

Special consideration

Should a candidate be unable to attend an examination because of illness, suffer bereavement or other trauma, be ill or otherwise disadvantaged or disturbed during an examination, then it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre's Examinations Officer or Head of Year. The candidate must support any special consideration claim with appropriate evidence within seven days of the examination.

The Examinations Officer will make a special consideration application to the relevant awarding body within ensuring the awarding body deadline is met.

10. Internal assessment

It is the duty of heads of department to ensure that all internal assessment is ready for dispatch at the correct time. The head of department must ensure there is a record of each dispatch, including the recipient details and the date. Items must be despatched via the school office.

Marks for all internally assessed work are provided to the examinations office by the head of department. The Examinations Officer will inform staff of the date when appeals against internal assessments must be made by. Any appeals will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's Internal Appeals Procedure.

11. Results

Candidates will receive individual results slips on results days,

- in person at the centre
- by post to their home address only if candidates provide a self-addressed envelope before the end of the summer term

- collected by a pre-arranged adult. Results are not passed to other students or available by e mail or phone

Arrangements for the centre to be open on results days are made by the Examinations Officer / Site Management Team.

The provision of the necessary staff on results days is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

Enquiries about Results (EAR) & Access to Scripts (ATS)

Reviews of marking may be requested by centre staff or the candidate following the release of results. A request for a review or clerical check requires the written consent of the candidate, a request for a re-moderation of internally assessed work may be submitted without the consent of the group of candidates.

The cost of EARs will be paid by the candidate although occasionally the department may decide to challenge a result and pay the fee for this.

After the release of results, candidates may ask subject staff to request the return of written examination papers within days of the receipt of results.

Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained and retained.

An EAR cannot be applied for once an original script has been returned. The cost of EARs will be paid by the centre or candidate.

Processing of requests for EARs and ATS will be the responsibility of the Examinations Officer

All processing of EARs will be the responsibility of the Examinations Officer following the JCQ guidance

13. Certificates

Candidates will receive their certificates

- in person at the centre on Speech Day (date available on the school calendar)
- collected and signed for at the Centre following Speech Day
- Certificates can be collected on behalf of a candidate by third parties, provided they have written authority from the candidate to do so, and bring suitable identification with them that confirms who they are.

Centre's are only required to keep certificates for one year after which remaining certificates should be either returned to the exam board or destroyed securely. Records of destroyed certificates should be held for four years from date of destruction.

A new certificate will not be issued by an awarding organisation. Students must contact the examination boards themselves to arrange for transcript of results for which they will be responsible for the costs incurred.

13. Appendix 1: Contingency 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 Presdales School.

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. (GR 5.3) 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)

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)

Qualifications covered by the plan

The qualifications covered by the plan are primarily large entry, externally assessed examinations delivered at Presdales. These include GCSEs, BTECs, AS levels, A levels, and university admission tests

Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example the police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency.

Reviewing the plan

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

Communications

In the event of a major disruption, communication is an important factor in ensuring an effective and consistent response across the agencies involved. This includes communications between the school, the examination bodies, candidates, and their parents or guardians. Details of whether specific contingencies have been agreed across organisations will be confirmed on [Ofqual's website](#) and proactively communicated to relevant stakeholders.

Presdales is committed to:

- sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan
- communicating with stakeholders so they are aware of disruption to the exams, the contingency measures being implemented and any actions required of them, ensuring that any messages to the public are clear and accurate

Scenarios

Eight specific scenarios are set out in this plan relating to widespread disruption of the examination system where Presdales would need to invoke contingency plans. The scenarios are set in sequence, following the way in which an examination would be planned and delivered, from issuing scripts to offering post results services.

Scenario 1 – Disruption of teaching time – Centre is closed for an extended period.

Type of scenario	Disruption to candidates
Impact on	Teachers, candidates, parents and carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that a significant number of centres are closed, and candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning
Example of scenario	Severe flooding
Recommended actions	Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare students for examinations as usual It is recommended that centres: - have contingency plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning, alternative venues or both - prioritise candidates who will be facing examinations shortly - advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series
Specific communication	The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this
Success criteria	Students continue to be taught either through an alternative method of learning or at an alternative venue
Further advice and information	Guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather , is available from the Department for Education. There is also statutory guidance on school closures Further advice from the Department of Education Northern Ireland can be found in the Useful Information section of this document

Scenario 2 – Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – Centre remains open

Type of scenario	Disruption to candidates
Impact on	School and college staff, teachers, candidates, parents and carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that candidates are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations as normal.
Example of scenario	A sickness bug means that a number of candidates are not able to attend a centre to take an examination.
Actions	Centre: - liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an

	<p>alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series - apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements <p>Please note: 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</p>
Specific communication	The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue. The centre to communicate with parents, carers and candidates regarding solutions to the issue.
Success criteria	Candidates are able to sit examinations with minimum disruption or additional stress to them.
Further advice and information	JCQ's guidance on special consideration and alternative site arrangements can be accessed through the JCQ website .

Scenario 3 – Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Type of scenario	Transport or delivery
Impact on	Awarding organisation staff, teachers, candidates
When to implement the plan	In the event that there is a disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations.
Example of scenario	A courier delivers a wrong set of examination papers to a centre.
Actions	<p>It is recommended that awarding organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - source alternative couriers for delivery of hard copies - provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network <p>The Centre will follow guidance provided by the awarding body on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances</p> <p>Please note that the examinations officer would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions</p>
Specific communication	<p>The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.</p> <p>Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue</p>
Success criteria	Students are able to proceed with taking examinations without having to reschedule examinations.
Further advice and information	not applicable

Scenario 4 – Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Type of scenario	Transport or delivery
Impact on	Courier staff, centre staff, awarding organisation staff
When to implement the plan	In the event that there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts
Example of scenario	A courier contacts a centre to report a problem about picking up scripts on time

Recommended actions	It is recommended that centres: - in the first instance, seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection - do not make their own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations - ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection
Specific communication	The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.
Success criteria	Scripts are stored 'securely' in line with JCQ guidance. Scripts are collected and delivered to awarding organisations with the minimum of delay
Further advice and information	JCQ guidance regarding the 'secure storage of scripts' can be found in section 1 of the 2022-2023 ICE book. https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/ Guidance on the 'Life of a script' is also available on the JCQ website

Scenario 5 – Centres are unable to open as normal during the examination period

Type of scenario	Disruption to centre
Specific communication	A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible
Success criteria	Students are able to take examinations in alternative venues in a timely way
Further advice and information	Centres should cover the impact on examinations as part of their general planning for emergencies The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre. The head is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether they are able to open. DfE guidance on school closures is available on the GOV.UK website
Recommended actions	It is recommended that centres: - open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible - use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public buildings if possible) Presdales would use the sports hall in the event the hall and gym could not be used, as this is a separate building where access can be achieved without using any other building. Other options available to the school, are Pinewood School (close to Presdales), or the Rugby Club hall (5 minutes from the school). A further option is the drill hall in Ware, which can be hired out. - apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements (see Scenario 3) - offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible - if it is not possible to retrieve exam furniture or IT from the school premises, these would either be hired or borrowed as required.
Specific communication	A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible Communicate with candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue
Success criteria	Students are able to take examinations in alternative venues in a timely way

Further advice and information	Centres should cover the impact on examinations as part of their general planning for emergencies The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre. The head is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether they are able to open. DfE guidance on school closures is available on the GOV.UK website
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Scenario 6 – Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Type of scenario	Marking
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, school and college staff, parents, carers and awarding organisation staff
When to implement the plan	In the event of large scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it can be marked
Example of scenario	A fire at the centre destroys completed examination scripts
Recommended actions	It is recommended that: - awarding organisations generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement, as defined by the awarding organisations in consultation with the regulators - candidates retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window, if possible
Specific communication	It is the responsibility of the head of centre to communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s) and subsequently to students and their parents or carers
Success criteria	Candidate marks are able to be generated (if possible) from existing assessment materials
Further advice and information	To be sought from the relevant awarding organisation

Scenario 7 – Centres are unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services.

Type of scenario	Issuing results
Impact on	Awarding organisation staff, school and college staff, candidates, parents and carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that schools or colleges are unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates or to facilitate post-results services.
Example of scenario	A school or college is closed and therefore candidates are not able to visit to find out their results
Recommended actions	It is recommended that schools and colleges: - make arrangements to access results at an alternative site - share facilities with other schools and colleges if possible
Specific communication	Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options Inform candidates of any alternative arrangements in place for the distribution of results and the facilitation of post-results services
Success criteria	Candidates receive results in a timely way
Further advice and information	not applicable

Scenario 8 – School IT Network cannot be accessed.

Type of scenario	School is subject to a Cyber-attack
Impact on	Whole school
When to implement the plan	In the event that the school loses access to its IT Network
Example of scenario	School network is not available before/during the exam series and when results are issued.
Recommended actions	<p>Failure of IT systems – Centre will ensure that security arrangements are put in place which protect candidates’ work (GR 3.19)</p> <p>Cyber-attack – The centre will ensure they follow the required arrangements for cyber security (GR 3.21). Awarding organisations are notified of Cyber-attack</p>
Specific communication	IT Manager to liaise closely with Exams Officer to ensure the smooth running of all exams related administration
Success criteria	<p>Before exams: -Exam entries can be made/amended directly via Awarding Body websites if SIMS is not available for EDI. Laptops can use mobile phone hot spots to access the internet. If SIMS sever is not corrupted, it will be possible to plug a laptop directly into it to gain SIMS access.</p> <p>During Exams -Secure download of papers can take place as above and a non-networked printer can be used for the printing of exams onto coloured paper. -Exam laptops have been tested and an Exam friendly version of Word can still be accessed without a network connection. -Computer reader software will be replaced with Human readers or Reading Pens.</p> <p>Exam Results: -If SIMS server has not been corrupted, results will be brought in as normal via EDI -If there is no access to SIMS, results will be downloaded directly from the Awarding Body websites. -Candidates result slips can be printed using non-networked printer.</p>
Further advice and information	Not Applicable

Summary of responsibilities in the event of disruption to examinations

Awarding organisations are responsible for:	Examination centres are responsible for:
Offering advice regarding communication with candidates, parents and carers	Communicating with candidates, parents and carers
	Preparing plans for any disruption to exams as part of general emergency planning
Ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations	Preparing candidates for examinations
	Ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations
	Ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and candidate work are stored under secure conditions
	Deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding organisations if the centre is unable to open
Advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining or approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements	Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding organisations
Evaluating and declining or approving requests for special consideration	Judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration as a result of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding organisations
	Assessing and liaising with awarding organisations in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers
Marking, moderating and grading candidate work	
Issuing results to centres on scheduled dates	The distribution of examination results to candidates
Advising UCAS and CAO about any delays that may impact on their deadlines	
Making a post results service available	Offering a post results service

14. Appendix 2: Contingency to delegate responsibilities in the absence of key exams staff

Before public exam season starts

Person Absent	Key activities to be covered	Delegated to
	Annual data collection exercise not undertaken to collate information on qualifications and awarding body specifications being delivered	Exams Administrator
	Annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines	Exams Administrator
Exams Officer	Make exam entries by deadline	Exams Administrator
	Make resit entries	Exams Administrator

	Print and distribute exam timetables. Deal with clashes etc.	Exams Administrator
	Arranges rooming, timetable and number of invigilators.	Exams Administrator
	Receives, checks and stores exam papers	Exams Administrator
	Book invigilators	Exams Administrator Cover Manager/
	Arrange training for invigilators	Exams Administrator / SENCO
	Plan use of rooms / readers/ scribes and equipment for those with access arrangements.	Exams Administrator /SENCO
SENCo	Applies for access arrangements and organises Form 8s	SEN Administrator/Exams Officer/ Qualified Assessor
Head of Centre	Returning the Head of Centre NCN annual update	Deputy Head (Curriculum)
	The signing of Awarding Body Centre Declarations	Deputy Head (Curriculum)
	Managing of Conflicts of Interest	Exams Officer/ Deputy Head (Curriculum)
	Ensuring JCQ & Awarding Body Deadlines have been met	Deputy Head (Curriculum)

During the exam season

Person Absent	Key activities to be covered	Delegated to
Exams Officer	Takes exam papers from secure storage, makes up exam boxes and passes to invigilator	Exams Administrator/Lead Invigilator
	Deals with issues arising during exams	Exams Administrator /SLT/ Nominated Invigilator depending on issue
	Receives completed scripts and organises preparation for despatch via Parcel Force	Exams Administrator
	Receives and deals with communications from exam boards	Exams Administrator
	Manages exams in separate facilities	Exams Administrator
	Makes applications for special consideration	Exams Administrator
	Books and liaises with invigilators	Exams Administrator
	Accesses and Uploads electronic exam papers	Exams Administrator
	Uploads materials and prepares rooms for ICT based exams	Exams Administrator
JCQ Inspection	Head of Centre	
Head of Depts	Records and despatches coursework marks and samples	Other dept staff/Exams Officer
Year Head/Form staff	Contacts absent candidates	SLT
Exams Officer/ Invigilator/ HoY	Starts exams and reports absences	Exams Administrator SLT/Hoy/ Invigilator
Head of Centre	Dealing with Malpractice Investigations and Reports	Deputy Head (Curriculum)

Results preparation

Person Absent	Key activities to be covered	Delegated to
Exams Officer	Prepares for receipt of results in conjunction with advice from SITTS	Exams Administrator /A Gale
	Downloads exam results, prints candidate results	Exams Administrator
	Passes provisional results to HCC	A Gale
	Administers EARS (Enquiries about results)	Exams Administrator
A Gale	Produces overall results analysis for SLT/ DFE etc.	SLT

15. Appendix 3 Escalation Process

Escalation process should the Head of Centre, or a member of the senior leadership team with oversight for examination administration, be absent.

In the event that the Head of Centre is absent during an exam or exam period, responsibility would fall to the Deputy Head in charge of Curriculum to oversee the exams officer. In the event that the Head of Centre and Deputy Head in charge of Curriculum are both absent, responsibility for oversight of exams would fall to the Deputy Head in charge of Pastoral.

It is school policy that the Head of Centre and the Deputy Heads will not be out of school at the same time.

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

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 2025-2026](#) 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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-englandwales-and-northern-ireland> 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 or bodies. 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, exams 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. If the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the centre’s contingency plan must be invoked, utilising the centre’s alternative site(s) and the relevant awarding bodies must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding bodies will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations. The awarding bodies will designate ‘contingency sessions’ for examinations, summer 2026. This is consistent with the qualification regulators’ document Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The designation of ‘contingency sessions’ within the common examination timetable is for use in the event of national or significant local disruption to examinations. It is part of the awarding bodies’ standard contingency planning for examinations. 4015.7 In the event of national disruption to a day of examinations in summer 2026, 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 Instructions for conducting examinations will be alerted if it is agreed to reschedule the examinations and the affected candidates will be expected to make themselves available in such circumstances. The decision regarding the rescheduling of examinations will always rest with the awarding body. The centre must conduct the examination on the scheduled date unless instructed to do otherwise by the awarding body. 15.8 Where

candidates choose not to be available for the rescheduled examination(s) for reasons other than those covered by special consideration, they will not be eligible for enhanced grading. Centres must, therefore, ensure candidates and parents are aware of the contingency arrangements so that they take them into account when making their plans for the summer."

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 weather and 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](#)