



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

Preparing for disruption to examinations

Effective from 1 September 2023

Produced on behalf of:



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This document is based on guidance provided within the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan, which is available on the JCQ website:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents/>

All centres **must** have a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency such as a power outage.

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.

There are three main categories of disruption, which are outlined below.

Candidates may not be able to take examinations – centres remain open

Centres' contingency plans should focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations. As part of these preparations, centres should take into account the guidance provided in the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

- consider moving the starting times of the examination for all candidates (see **section 6.2** of the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*)
- being aware of the rules for very late arrivals (see **section 21** of the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*).

Wherever possible, it is always in the best interest for candidates to sit the examination. However, special consideration is an option where a candidate is unable to sit the examination (see **Chapter 4** of the JCQ document *A guide to the special consideration process*):

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

The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required.

Centres may not be able to open for examinations

As above, centres' contingency plans **must** focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations if the centre is at risk of not being able to open as normal.

The decision whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre who is responsible for taking advice or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies.

Information on what centres should do if examinations/assessments are seriously disrupted can be found in the three country regulators' exam system contingency plan:

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

Special consideration is an option if all other avenues have been exhausted and candidates meet the published criteria.

The relevant awarding body should be contacted if additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations is required.

Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Where examinations are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding bodies arrange collections, centres should contact the relevant awarding bodies for advice and instructions.

For examinations where centres make their own collection arrangements, they should investigate alternative options that comply with the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*.

Scripts **must** always be kept in the secure room until as close to the collection time as possible. Script packages **must not** be left unattended at the collection area.

Summary of centre and awarding body responsibilities

Centres are responsible for:

- preparing plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their written examination contingency plan
- deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding bodies if the centre is unable to open
- implementing alternative arrangements for the conducting of examinations, as part of their written examination contingency plan, if the centre cannot open for examinations
- notifying the JCQ Centre Inspection Service of an alternative site arrangement by submitting the JCQ Alternative Site form online, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP). The Centre Admin Portal (CAP) can be accessed via any of the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites
- judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration because of any disruption and submitting requests to the relevant awarding bodies
- assessing their circumstances and liaising with awarding bodies in the event of disruption to collection arrangements for completed examination scripts.

Awarding bodies are responsible for:

- ensuring centres receive examination materials for scheduled examinations
- advising centres on possible alternative examination arrangements and declining/approving proposals for alternative examination arrangements
- declining/approving requests for special consideration.

Awarding body contact details

For further advice please contact the relevant awarding body:

AQA

0800 197 7162

eos@aqa.org.uk

OCR

01223 553998

support@ocr.org.uk

CCEA

028 9026 1212

028 9026 1293

028 9026 1425

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Pearson

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