



Learning that Connects

# Examination Contingency Plan 2015/16

**Policy date:** September 2015

**Review date:** September 2017

**Chair of Governors:** Bob Paton

**Governors Approval:** May 2016

Please note that Simon Hanson is our Chair of Governors as from 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016

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## 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 Studio West. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked 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 scenarios contained in the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

This plan complies with JCQ general regulations (section 5) in that:

*The centre agrees to “have in place a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to have a robust contingency plan in place, minimising risk to examination administration, should the examinations officer be absent at a crucial stage of the examination cycle;”*

## Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

### Risk 1 - Examinations Officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

The following key tasks involved in the administration of the examination cycle, which would be at risk in the event that the Examinations Officer was absent for a prolonged period:

#### Planning

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

#### Entries

- awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
- candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
- awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred

### **Pre-exams**

- exam timetabling, rooming allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared
- candidates not briefed on exam timetables and awarding body information for candidates
- exam/assessment materials and candidates' work not stored under required secure conditions
- internal assessment marks and samples of candidates' work not submitted to awarding bodies/external moderators

### **Exam time**

- exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
- required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
- candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies

### **Results and post-results**

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

### **Studio West Options:**

- The Principal should nominate the Deputy Principal to oversee the work being carried out by various other support staff in school.
- The Examinations Officer of another school can be requested to provide assistance.
- Consideration should be given to Work Shadowing.
- All procedures are documented and guidance notes available.
- Support can be gained from:-
  - the Key Tasks section of The Exams Office website.
  - The Examinations Oracle and Centre Support of the Examination Officers Association.
  - The Examinations Administration section of the DFE website.
  - The Exams Office section of the Joint Council for Qualifications website

## **Risk 2 – SENCo extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

The following key tasks required in the management and administration of the Access Arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

### **Planning**

- candidates not tested/assessed to identify potential access arrangement requirements
- evidence of need and evidence to support normal way of working not collated

### **Pre-exams**

- approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body
- modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline
- staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained

### **Exam time**

- Access Arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms

### **Studio West Options:**

- The Deputy Principal works closely with the SENCo in the management of Access Arrangements and would therefore have up to date knowledge of what tasks were to complete.
- Likewise, if the Deputy Principal was absent, the SENCo would have up to date knowledge of what tasks were to complete.
- Examinations Officer to assist in the Access Arrangements, as appropriate.

## **Risk 3 – Teaching Staff extended absence at key points of the exam cycle**

The following key tasks required in the management and administration of the Access Arrangements process within the exam cycle not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the exams officer on time; resulting in:
  - candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late
  - late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
  - Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines

### **Studio West Options:**

- Principal/Deputy Principal/Subject Learning Coaches to provide Examinations Officer with details of Estimated Entries/Final Entries.
- Principal/Deputy Principal to liaise with Subject Learning Coaches to provide information to complete Estimated Grades/Coursework marks.

### **Risk 4 – Lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence**

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

### **Studio West Options:**

- Examinations Officer to maintain a panel of suitable Invigilators which can be called upon in the event of a shortfall.
- Conduct a review of available invigilators and their availability for the next exams series.
- Use provisional timetable and estimated entry information to determine invigilator numbers required.
- Identify where invigilators may be short.
- Request permission to recruit additional invigilators
- Principal/Deputy Principal to provide additional Invigilator resource in the event of a shortfall at short notice.
- Staff agencies to be contacted if none of the above is successful.

### **Risk 5 – Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice**

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

### **Studio West Options:**

- Examination Officer to identify a list of suitable rooms including reserves.
- Move students from normal classrooms for the duration of the examinations.
- Plan alternative accommodation for the duration of the incident.

## **Risk 6 – Failure of IT systems**

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

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

### **Studio West Options:**

- Awarding bodies to be informed of the situation and an extension to the deadline should be requested.
- MIS contractor and ICT team on standby to repair damage quickly.
- Special Consideration can be applied for in the event of a serious disruption.
- Results can be obtained at an alternative site.

## **Risk 7 – Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period**

- Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning

### **Studio West Options:**

- It remains the responsibility of centres to prepare students, as usual, for examinations.
- In the event that the Principal 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.
- The centre to open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.
- Alternative centres should be considered in the event that candidates cannot come to school.
- Centres may advise candidates to sit examinations in an alternative series.
- Special Consideration can be used where candidates are unable to achieve a result due to one of the above factors.
- An exam result can be generated by the awarding body, based on factors such as a child's performance on other assessments in the same subject.

### **Risk 8 – Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open**

Candidates are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal.

#### **Studio West Options:**

- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations
- Centres to offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series
- Centres to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have a medical certificate or have been advised by their centre not to attend an examination.
- If a candidate chooses not to sit an examination they should be aware that special consideration rules will not apply.
- JCQ guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the JCQ website



## **Risk 9 - Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open**

- Centre closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period.
- The provision of normal teaching and learning is interrupted.
- Centre closed due to inaccessibility or risk of injury caused by severe weather.

### **Studio West Options:**

- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.
- Centres to offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- Centres to apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have a medical certificate or have been advised by their centre not to attend an examination.
- If a candidate chooses not to sit an examination they should be aware that special consideration rules will not apply.
- JCQ guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the JCQ website.

## **Risk 10 - Disruption in the distribution of examination papers**

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

### **Recommended Actions:**

- Awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.
- Awarding organisations may be able to fax examination papers to centres if electronic transfer is not possible.
- The Examinations Officer would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.
- Source alternative couriers for delivery of hardcopies.

## **Risk 11 - Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts**

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

### **Recommended Actions:**

- In the first instance centres to seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection. Centres are not to make their own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations.
- Centres to ensure secure storage of completed examination papers until collection.

## **Risk 12 - Assessment evidence is not available to be marked**

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked

*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. [JCP scenario 6]*

### **Recommended Actions:**

- Awarding organisations to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations
- Candidates to retake affected assessment at subsequent assessment window

## **Risk 13 - Centre unable to distribute results as normal**

### **Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate post-results services

### **Recommended Actions:**

- Centre to make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site.
- Centre to make arrangements to coordinate access to post results services from an alternative site.
- Awarding organisations to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network.
- Awarding organisations may be able to fax examination papers to centres if electronic transfer is not possible. The Examinations Officer would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.
- Centre to share facilities with other centres if this is possible.

**Causes 7-13** – all scenarios, criteria and specific communications have been taken directly from the *Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

## Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

### Ofqual

*Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/joint-contingency-plan-in-the-event-of-widespread-disruption-to-the-examination-system-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland>

### JCQ

*General regulations*

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

*Guidance on alternative site arrangements*

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/forms>

*Instructions for conducting examinations*

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

*A guide to the special consideration process*

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

### GOV.UK

*Emergencies and severe weather: schools and early years settings*

<https://www.gov.uk/emergencies-and-severe-weather-schools-and-early-years-settings>

*Teaching time lost due to severe weather conditions*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions/teaching-time-lost-due-to-severe-weather-conditions>

*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/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide>