



Exam Contingency Plan

Updated Spring 2024



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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 Ashcroft Technology Academy. 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 JCQ 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

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

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

- No access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
- lack of provision of awarding body post results services

Centre actions

- LG to nominate a deputy to cover all roles/task in the event of exams manager's absence.
- Exams manager and Deputy Principal with responsibility for exams meet at regular intervals throughout the academic year to track ensure key administrative tasks have been completed.
- Exams manager and Deputy Principal to plan ahead for the completion of future administrative tasks.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Planning

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

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

Centre actions

- LG to nominate a deputy within the SEN department to cover all roles/task in the event of SENCo's absence.
- Exams manager to support where needed.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

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

Centre actions

- Exams officer to liaise with curriculum managers (CMs), CMs to delegate accordingly.
- LG to nominate a deputy in the event of CM absence.
- Part time or permanent cover to be organised via cover director.

4. Principal or LG extended absence at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- NEA declaration unsigned and relevant approvals not given

- Absence of leadership during exam days
- Absence of line management for HoY

Centre actions

- Exams officer to inform the NCN of change in leadership if the Principal is absent
- Vice Principal assumes leadership position until the return of the Principal or a temporary or permanent replacement is found
- LG restructured to provide exam years with leadership

5. Invigilators - lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Failure to recruit sufficient invigilators to meet the JCQ requirements for appropriate invigilator ratios
- Failure to provide adequate training to new invigilators, or refresher and update training to returning staff
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

Centre actions

- See Centre Actions, CP scenario 1
- LG to nominate a deputy to recruit and train invigilators in event of exam manager's absence.
- Cover director and exams manager to stand in during busy times
- Cover director to assist in late recruitment via agencies

6. Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- 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

Centre actions

- Alternative venues within and without school to be sought. Putney High and Southfields identified as suitable alternative venues in case of significant disruption.
- The Academy has extra gym space to accommodate candidates should the main room be out of use.

7. Failure of IT systems or cyber attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

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

Centre actions

- SIMS is backed up weekly and all data is stored securely. Access to this information will be provided to the exams officer or nominated deputy. Network support team to support.
- Deputy Principal, Exams Manager and centre staff have access to exam board website for manual entries if needed.
- Use of MS Office cloud to store all files remotely, reducing the risk of damage due to a cyber attack

8. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- 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

Centre actions

- Centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the disruption to teaching time and provide appropriate work via the school intranet.
- Centre to adopt Blended Learning policy
- In case of national closures, follow government guidance on delivery of examinations.
- Centre to apply for special consideration for candidates where appropriate and within the guidelines of the awarding bodies.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

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

Centre actions

- Centre will communicate with relevant awarding organisation to make them aware of the issue.
- Centre will then communicate solutions to parents/carers and candidates

10. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

Centre actions

- Centre to inform awarding organisation of examinations to be affected
- See Centre Actions, CP scenario 5, 7, 8.

11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

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

Centre actions

- The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCP scenario 3]
- Centre Reprographics department to be available to print papers from exam board secure sites at short notice, if needed. Students to be supervised by exams staff and senior leaders during any waiting time.

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts.

Centre actions

- Centre will communicate and organise alternative arrangements for delivery of scripts.

13. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions

- Immediate communication to be made with relevant awarding body
- Candidates, parents and carers to be informed by letter

14. 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

Centre actions

- Deputy principal to delegate responsibility/cover sought for affected period

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

JCQ

General Regulations

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

ICE – Information for Conducting Exams

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

Joint Contingency Plan

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/4-5-1-Joint-Contingency-Plan-April-2019.pdf>

GOV.UK

Exam regulations and administration

https://www.gov.uk/education/exam-regulation-and-administration#policy_and_engagement

Contingency planning guidance

<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>