



KING EDWARD VI
SHELDON HEATH ACADEMY

EXAMINATIONS – CONTINGENCY PLAN

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 KESH 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 *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, 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

Centre actions:

- Two additional centre staff and trained to fulfil the role of the examinations officer and maintain the efficiency of the examination process.
- Key information is securely stored in an area accessible to the above staff in case of an emergency.

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:

- One additional centre staff and trained to fulfil the role of SENCo.
- Key information is securely stored in an area accessible to the above staff in case of an emergency.

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:

- SLT line managers and VP in charge of curriculum are familiar with key tasks and deadlines. They work in collaboration with departmental staff, examinations manager and seek advice from the board should this be required to ensure exams related tasks are completed accurate and timely.
- The examinations manager informs VP in charge of curriculum of any issues that may require further action.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- Invigilators are made aware of examinations dates and their commitment as soon as the entry process is completed; this helps them plan for availability.
- Early planning ensures that we are aware well in advance of days where there may not be enough invigilators; where necessary, further appointments are made.
- All invigilators attend training at least two weeks before the examinations start; follow up training is put in place if required.
- For exams of less than 50 candidates, 1 extra invigilator is always booked. For exams between 50 and 150 candidates, 2 extra invigilators are booked. For larger exams, 3 extra invigilators are booked. This helps address potential last minute issues.
- Support staff, such as the librarian, can be used for invigilation (always in the presence of other invigilators).
- If necessary, agency invigilators are organised on the day, however this is a last resort.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- *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:

- The Academy will:
 - Use resources effectively – when required, lessons are re-roomed to facilitate exams.
 - Prioritise resources to ensure the smooth operation of the examination process.

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*

Centre actions:

- The Academy will address IT issues as follows:
 - Issuing results -If awarding organisations face delays in meeting the planned schedule for issuing results, they will:
 - establish priorities for processing results in line with UCAS and Central Applications Office (CAO) deadlines
 - implement existing contingency plans for disruption to the schedule for issuing results
 - in consultation with regulators, assess the level of disruption and consider alternative options for issuing results, dependent upon the nature of the issue
 - in consultation with regulators, liaise with relevant organisations (eg UCAS, CAO) regarding candidate progression to further and higher education
 - Issuing results: if awarding organisations are unable to issue accurate results, they will:
 - revalidate results
 - reissue results, via alternative format if necessary.
 - If the Academy is unable to distribute results, the Academy will:
 - make arrangements to access results at an alternative site
 - Share facilities with other schools and colleges
 - If awarding organisations are unable to offer post results services, they will:
 - Make arrangements to provide post results services through alternative methods (spreadsheets)
 - Prioritise for candidates going through UCAS.
 - If MIS failure at the Academy affects final entry deadline, the Academy will work with awarding organisations to ensure timely entries using an alternative format, for example spreadsheets.

- If MIS failure during exams preparation, the Academy will use alternative IT software, for example spreadsheets to proceed with exam preparation; all relevant information is regularly backed up in a spreadsheet.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- 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

The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.

Centre actions:

- The Academy will:
 - Make all efforts to keep the centre running, especially during examination periods.
 - Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the Academy is able to open.
 - Prioritise for candidates who will be facing examinations shortly and especially for those whose progression will be severely delayed if they do not take their exam or timetabled assessment when planned.
 - Use technology to provide distance learning support to all candidates.
 - Advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series.
 - Use alternative local venues for support teaching.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

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.

Centre actions:

- The Academy will invoke this contingency plan and will liaise with awarding bodies and other agencies. This will focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations.
- The Academy will liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations.
- Candidates, where possible, will be given the opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.
- The Academy will apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements.
- Communicate with parents, carers and students any changes to the exam or assessment timetable or to the venue.
- Communicate with any external assessors or relevant third parties regarding any changes to the exam or assessment timetable.

9. Exams Officer late/ill at key points in the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Exams Officer late or ill at key points in the exam cycle.

A centre without an exams officer for a short period of time to undertake key tasks.

Centre actions:

- The VP with responsibility for exams is immediately notified to liaise with exams officer regarding key priorities for the duration of absence.
- Two additional centre staff and trained to fulfil the role of the examinations officer and maintain the efficiency of the examination process.
- Key information is securely stored in an area accessible to the above staff in case of an emergency.

- Lead invigilators will oversee exams administration and ensure the security of the exam – they receive regular training to be able to fulfil this duty.

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

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.

Centre actions:

- The Academy will:
 - invoke this contingency plan which will focus on options that enable candidates to take their examinations. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre.
 - open for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible
 - use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (eg share facilities with other centres or use other public buildings if possible)
 - apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements
 - offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible

11. 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

The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers. [JCP scenario 3]

Centre actions:

- The Academy will work with awarding organisations to support the following:
 - sourcing alternative couriers for delivery of hard copies
 - electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network
 - receiving examination papers by fax if electronic transfer is not possible.
- The examinations officer would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions. Awarding organisations would provide guidance on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances.
- As a last resort, and in close collaboration with centres and regulators, the Academy will work with awarding organisations to consider scheduling of the examination on an alternative date.

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue. [JCP scenario 4]

Centre actions:

- The Academy will in the first instance, seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection
- The Academy will not make its own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations; it will ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.
- For any examinations where centres make their own arrangements for transportation, the Academy will investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.

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

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.

Centre actions:

- The Academy will:
 - support awarding organisations whilst they 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
 - advise candidates to retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window, if possible

14. Centre unable to distribute results as normal or facilitate post results services

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

Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. [JCP scenario 11]

Centre actions:

- The Academy will:
 - make arrangements to access results at an alternative site in agreement with the relevant awarding organisation
 - share facilities with other schools and colleges if possible
 - use technology as appropriate to ensure that all efforts to distribute results are exhausted

Facilitation of post results services – the Academy will:

- make arrangements to make post results requests at an alternative location
- contact the relevant awarding organisation if electronic post results requests are not possible
- liaise with awarding organisations to review the post results deadlines

Emergency Evacuation procedure for examinations

1. Roles and responsibilities

Head of centre

Ensures the emergency evacuation policy for exams is fit for purpose and complies with relevant health and safety regulations.

Senior leader

Where responsible for the centre-wide emergency evacuation procedure, ensures all staff and appointed fire marshals are aware of the policy and procedures to be followed when an emergency evacuation of an exam room is required.

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Ensures appropriate arrangements are in place for the emergency evacuation of a disabled candidate from an exam room where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for the candidate.
- Ensures the candidate is informed prior to taking their exams of what will happen in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Exams officer

- Ensures invigilators are trained in emergency evacuation procedures and how an incident and actions taken must be recorded.
- Ensures candidates are briefed (Candidate exam handbook), prior to exams taking place, on what will happen in the event of an emergency in the exam room.
- Provides invigilators with a copy of the emergency evacuation procedures for every exam room.
- Provides a standard invigilator announcement for each exam which includes appropriate information for candidates regarding what will happen if the fire alarm sounds.
- Provides an exam room incident log in each exam room.
- Liaises with the SENCo and other relevant staff prior to each exam where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate.
- Briefs invigilators prior to each exam where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate.
- Ensures appropriate follow-up is undertaken after an emergency evacuation reporting the incident to the awarding body and the actions taken through the special consideration process.

Invigilators

- By attending training, ensure they understand what to do in the event of an emergency in the exam room.
- Follow the actions required in the emergency evacuation procedure issued to them for every exam room.
- Confirm with the exams officer, where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate they are invigilating.

Other relevant centre staff

- Support the senior leader, SENCo, exams officer and invigilators in ensuring the safe emergency evacuation of exam rooms.

2. In an emergency where the centre needs to be evacuated, the invigilator will take the following actions:

- Stop the candidates from writing.
- Collect the attendance register to ensure that all candidates are present.
- Evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority.
- Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room.
- Candidates should leave the room in silence.
- Make sure that the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure that there is no discussion about the examination.
- Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
- Allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination.
- If there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the examination.
- Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken and send to the relevant awarding body.