



# Examination Contingency Plan

## 2025-2026

|                         |                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| This policy applies to: | Staff and Students                |
| Person responsible:     | Cyanne Holt, Examinations Manager |
| Date approved:          | April 2026                        |
| Related Documents:      | Exams Policy                      |
| Approved by:            | Lisa Richards                     |
| TITLE:                  | Examination Contingency Plan      |
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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 Ashton 6<sup>th</sup> Form College. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed in case of disruption, it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

At all times, the Examinations Manager (EM), Examinations Administrators (EA) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will liaise with the relevant Awarding Body to ensure any contingency plans meet with its requirements and that JCQ regulations (5.3z) are adhered to where possible.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by information contained in the *Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and complies with the need to 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, examination officer or SENCOs 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, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency. The potential impact of a cyber-attack should also be considered and addressed. See SPT Cyber Security Policy on Sharepoint.”

*In the unlikely absence of the Head of Centre or designated SLT Examinations Lead, The Examinations Manager will report to the designated parties, destined to succeed either of the two. **GR 3.17-Resilience and contingency arrangements***

*There needs to be at least one senior member of staff (senior designated contact)*

## Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

### 1. Examination Manager 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 is not updated identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines (including dates for on-demand exams);
  - sufficient invigilators not recruited and/or not trained;
  - no liaison with SLT regarding fees for the upcoming academic year. This includes decision on resit exam fees for BTEC, November examination resit and external candidate fees;
  - no management of IT equipment, software requirements and rooming facilities for the upcoming year.
- *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/registration;
  - awarding body entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred;
  - exam invoices not checked or unpaid resulting in restrictions or limitations to access or functionality of respective Exam Board(s).
- *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;
  - Conflict of Interest information not collected/recorded in line with JCQ requirements;
  - Head of Centre has not successfully completed the NCN declaration and NCN survey has not been completed by Examinations Manager (EM);
  - Access Arrangements not applied for and therefore not accounted for in examination seating plans.
- *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/late access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates;
  - no grade boundary documentation is unavailable;
  - hindrance to facilitation of the post-results service and fees associated with requirements.

Centre actions:

- Senior Examinations Administrator (SEA) and Examinations Administrators (EA) to assume responsibility for the above tasks with the support of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- **Planning**
  - annual overview schedule of examinations, assessments, invigilator training and student tutorials commenced in Spring, completed in Summer term;
  - annual entry data collection exercise begun in summer term and updated/confirmed by Heads of Department by start of academic year (SEA);
  - annual exams plan identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines published for centre staff – key dates added to interactive exam calendar;
  - invigilators given training dates & exam schedule at start of year; invigilator availability chart updated and recruitment process initiated if numbers insufficient. Administration staff included in invigilator training as back up for emergency cover;
- **Entries**
  - SEA produces qualifications document from data collection exercise, planned entries confirmed with Head of Department, estimated entry information submitted by EAs via awarding body websites as required;
  - EAs prepare entry sheets for external exams/assessment based on entry data collection and post to Sharepoint to be reviewed by Heads of Departments (HoDs);
  - internal confirmation deadline at least 2 weeks before awarding body entry deadline. Email reminders before deadlines regarding amendments and withdrawals.
- **Pre-exams**
  - examination venues booked via Room Booking System. Annual examinations overview and bespoke Exam Operation Schedules published on Sharepoint, Canvas and Website; JCQ information for candidates and staff updated on Canvas, Sharepoint and college website. Student Tutorials for first and second years timetabled during Autumn Term
  - process for receipt and storage of exam/assessment materials reviewed and affirmed;
  - subject leads retain dated pre-release materials and candidates' work in secure conditions until required by awarding body;
  - HoDs responsible for ensuring awarding body procedures are followed. Examinations Team access and forward pre-release materials to subject leads on release dates and subsequently post/upload samples for moderation as required;
  - Subject leads responsible for ensuring sufficient lead time to enable students to review marks as detailed in the *Non-Exam Assessment Review of Marking* policy.
- **Exam time**
  - all staff involved in exam delivery provided with JCQ regulations and briefed as necessary;
  - templates of all required reports downloaded in advance of exams e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration. Individual files prepared for any candidates identified as requiring special consideration with evidence to support;
  - registers and labels/bags prepared before each exam, scripts packaged immediately exam is finished and dispatched in accordance with yellow label procedures. When necessary ad hoc collections booked in advance by exams administrators.
- **Results and post-results**
  - details of results day published on Canvas, Sharepoint and college website for students, staff, parents;
  - updates to IT systems (WIFI/Firewalls) and to Unite carried out by IT and MIS, respectively, to ensure latest requirements to process results. A2C tested to ensure links to awarding bodies are active. Access to college emails;

- information on Post Results Service (PRS), application process and fees published on Canvas, Sharepoint and emailed to all staff.

- ***In the absence of the Examinations Manager any of the following controls may apply:***

- **SLT Line Manager**, Sheridan Lewis, Vice Principal Curriculum and Planning, to work with **Senior Examinations Manager** to organise day to day running of exams within the Exams Department with advice and support from local Tameside Exams Officer network or Tameside College Consortium;
- use guides to specific exam processes in the “Procedures” exam file stored electronically in One Drive >asfc\_Staff Exams > Exams Admin> ~Office Admin > Procedures;
- contact awarding bodies’ exams office support helplines, The Exams Office or JCQ for advice
- ‘Examinations matters’ to be a weekly item on SLT agenda to ensure all aspects of the department’s operations are discussed and considered
- Additional staffing hired as necessary

## 2. Inclusive Learning Manager (IL) 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 (IL)
- **Pre-exams**
  - approval for access arrangements not applied for to the awarding body - Exams Dep
  - modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering of interactive scripts to meet external deadline – Exams Dep
  - staff providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained
- **Exam time**
  - access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms
  - insufficient invigilator support in place to manage specific access arrangement requirements

### Centre actions:

- **Planning**
  - The Inclusive Learning Manager (ILM) and IL staff work with Feeder Schools, outside organisations, teachers, Senior Tutors, parents/carers and students to make early identification of students where applications for access arrangements may be required;
  - IL initiates appropriate testing and gathers evidence of need and evidence in support normal way of working to support an AAO application;
  - SLT to ensure that at least two members of the IL team are qualified to carry out access arrangement assessments;
  - where required the Inclusive Learning Manager will liaise with Consortium Stamford Park Trust partners to source staff;
  - where required the Inclusive Learning Manager will source staff from teaching agencies.
- **Pre-exams**

- EM & ILM liaise at start of academic year to identify internal deadlines for assessing and submitting access arrangements to Exams Department in line with published deadlines;
- ILM to liaise with visual and hearing impaired support staff to identify specific needs of legally blind/deaf candidates, in line with Tameside Council services.
- Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) inbox managed daily within Exams Department and applications processed via Access Arrangements Online (AAO), and added to general master spreadsheet; relevant updates made in Unite
- **Exam time**
  - access arrangement identified; tried and tested under exam conditions during mock / progression exams;
  - access arrangements identified per series and prioritised for rooming and invigilator support before seating of the main cohort

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

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

Planning

- *Early/estimated entry information not provided to the exams department on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received*
- *Candidates not being informed of their internal marks on time;*
- *Final entry information not provided to the exams department 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/input to meet submission deadlines*

Centre actions:

- The acting Head of Department, or 'Second in Department', to liaise with Examinations Manager and/or SLT, to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. Where this is not possible. EM may be required to liaise with the relevant Awarding Body and act upon advice received.

### 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:

- The EM and SEA will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion.
- The EM (supported by SLT) will be aware of the college staff available for invigilation-related duties during emergencies
- EM (supported by SLT) will inform staff of any emergency invigilation duties.

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

#### Criteria for implementation of the plan

- *Examinations Manager unable to identify sufficient / appropriate rooms during exam time-tabling*
- *Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days*
- *Main exam venues unavailable due to an unexpected incident at exam time*

Centre actions:

- The EM will organise rooming for examinations well in advance of the event, and inform all areas at the beginning of the academic year of the dates of all examinations;  
The exam department has first refusal on all rooms in college and will discuss with SLT the requirement to cancel lessons on peak exam days;
- For summer examinations, rooming will be completed before the Easter holidays ensuring sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately. If required EM will request SLT make decision regarding alternative teaching/trips off site to enable additional rooming for external examinations;
- Should an unexpected event occur which deems an exam room unavailable, the department will look to reallocate the room with MIS, or alternatively (in the case of the largest room – Sports Hall) source an alternative venue

**6. Failure of IT systems (to be reviewed in conjunction with STP Trust Disaster Recovery Plan and Cyber Security Policy - April 2023.pdf)**

Failure of MIS system: Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions:

- The EM, in consultation with the SLT, will make entries via the exam board websites directly. Results may also be accessed directly from the Awarding Body (AB). At all times during the system failure the EM will liaise with the AB to minimise disruption and costs incurred
- The college has a maintenance agreement with UNIT-e. The most recent back-up will be used to restore all software and data.
- The following staff have been identified as key personnel because they are staff whose contribution is difficult to compensate for by using another person: MIS Manager, IT Manager
- Capita FHE can provide personnel to manage the MIS System.

Failure of ICT Systems: Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Hardware failure i.e. disc drives / audio output / printers / computers
- Software failure i.e. exam software that has been installed on to designated machines
- No internet connection
- IT Staff absence

Centre actions:

- Some spare stock of hardware parts i.e. disc drives is kept onsite.
- In the event of a printer failure, a suitable printer will be taken from another location onsite to replace the faulty printer. Additional printers can be rented from the supplier.
- The IT team test and check all hardware and software booked for exams, prior to assessments
- There are at least three IT staff, who share reasonably equal skills and knowledge so there is no redundancy in personnel as any team member can replace another.
- In the event of short staffing additional staff can be brought onsite from C-Ways.

## 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.

### Centre actions:

- SLT to manage all such incidents. Exam candidates to be given priority.
- Alternative access to teaching via Microsoft Teams.

## 8. 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 EM will contact the relevant AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action. Ashton Sixth Form College to utilise facilities at one or more of the following schools in Stamford Park Trust:
  - **Rayner Stephens High School:** Yew Tree Ln, Dukinfield, SK16 5BL
  - **Longendale High:** Spring Street, Hyde, SK14 8LW
  - **Fairfield High:** Fairfield Ave, Droylsden, Manchester M43 6AB
  -

## 9. 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 EM/SEA will contact the relevant AB to discuss alternative arrangements and liaise with the SLT to take appropriate action. This will usually involve relocating examinations to an alternative building on site.
  - Sports Hall closure – exams would be relocated to the MB classrooms, Lecture Theatre and onsite Portacabins and lessons would be temporarily suspended

## 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

*\*The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.*

### Centre actions:

- EM to maintain a checklist of all exam papers expected. Count of exam papers upon receipt.
- Check AB tracking for missing deliveries then contact awarding body dispatch team.
- Arrange for emergency courier delivery or secure electronic dispatch of question papers at short notice. Arrange secure printing and storage of scripts.

### 11. 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:

- The EM/EA will contact the AB to notify them of any such difficulties and put in place suitable alternative arrangements. EM to store the completed scripts, fully packaged, within the secure facility.

### 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

#### Centre actions:

- The EM/EA will contact the AB to notify them of any such incidents and act upon advice given.
- Where possible, provide alternative evidence of candidates' achievement from existing assessment materials.
- If possible, arrange for assessments to be retaken in line with awarding body instructions.
- Inform parents and candidates what action has been taken and how results will be affected.

### 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

*Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options.*

#### Centre actions:

- Contact awarding organisations for advice
- Arrange an alternative site from which to distribute results
- Post results home
- Inform candidates and parents of new arrangements via email, school website
- If the centre is unable to process post results services, contact the awarding bodies to inform them and have paper copies of application form available if the fault is relating to electronic submission

\*information taken from the *Joint contingency plan for 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.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/>

### **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 - Contingency planning*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-guide>

### **JCQ**

*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>

*Guidance on access arrangements and special consideration*

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