



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

Preparing for disruption to examinations

Effective from 1 September 2022

Produced on behalf of:



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

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

In the event of widespread disruption to the examination system, all centres **must** have contingency plans in place. There are three main categories of disruption, which are outlined below.

Candidates at risk of being unable 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 publication *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 publication *Instructions for conducting examinations*)
- being aware of the rules for very late arrivals (see **section 21** of the JCQ publication *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 publication *A guide to the special consideration process*):

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

Please call the relevant awarding body if you require additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations.

Centres at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period

As above, centres' contingency plans **must** focus on enabling candidates to take their examinations if the centre is at risk of being unable to open as normal.

The responsibility for deciding 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.

Please call the relevant awarding body if you require additional support or guidance in the event of disruption to examinations.

Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

If there is a delay in normal 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 publication *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 general emergency planning
- deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding bodies if the centre is unable to open
- exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding bodies
- judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration because of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding bodies
- assessing their circumstances and liaising with awarding bodies in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers.

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.

Contacting the awarding bodies

In all cases, if there are any concerns, please contact the relevant awarding body for advice:

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
centresupport@ccea.org.uk

Pearson
0344 463 2535

WJEC
02920 265 077
exams@wjec.co.uk