



Beamont Collegiate Academy

EXAMS CONTINGENCY POLICY

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Signature of Chair to the C&L committee	G Porter
Signature of Academy Principal	A Moorcroft
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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 Beamont Collegiate 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:

- BCA has two members of the administrative team that are able to manage the Examination process. Ms A Gaunt (Exams Officer), Mrs Y Hull (SIMS Manager). A further admin Office Worker has the knowledge and skills to complete a number of the paper based tasks listed above (Mrs L Babbington).
- There is also a link to the Examinations Officer (Marie Fisher) at Penketh High School.

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:

- The SENCO is supported by a strong team of Teaching Assistants and PSAs. The HLTA has secondary responsibilities for assisting with the AA during the Exam Cycle and can assist as required.
- Mrs E Edwards is also a qualified Centre Assessor who currently works closely with the SENCO to test pupils.
- The Exams Officer and SENCO work closely for the processing of the AA online.

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:

- The SIMS manager and Vice Principal work closely with each HOD to ensure that the timetable for all staff is covered during periods of absence. Individual teachers liaise with HODs to ensure that the internal examination timetable is adhered to.
- HOD meet with EO to confirm entry deadlines (and associated examination details) throughout the year.

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 external invigilation team is a constantly being updated with recruitment taking place on an annual basis at the start of the Spring Term.
- Throughout the year a job advert is maintained on the school website should a shortfall occur?
- Our aim is to maintain a larger group of invigilators than required to ensure we are covered during invigilator holiday periods

- Internally all TAs and PSAs are trained to invigilate and assist with exams for pupils with Access Arrangements. These staff may also be used as a general invigilator should the need arise.
- A member of the SLT is attached to each examination (in **line** with JCQ restrictions)

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 allocation of rooms for the examination periods is identified at the start of the school year. The rooms allocated include the following: Cabin, Hub, Bridge, West Hall, West Gym and Drama Room.
- Where necessary alternative venues are requested for vulnerable students or those with medical needs.
- Should other venues be required, our relationship with WC College, the external Hub and Orford Youth Base assist with the allocation of additional venues. (all of which meet JCQ guidelines)

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 ICT technical manager (NMA) to liaise with the Business manager and WC College in times of network management issue/down time. Strong links exist throughout the year with the College having some additional management responsibility. The Academy subscribe to the SIMS Support Contract with the LA.
- Also refer to the 'Critical Incident Policy'

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. [Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 1]*

Centre actions:

- Refer to the Critical incident Policy
- Where possible Year 11 will be prioritised for continuing Education and Examinations within the building.
- Our relationship with Warrington Collegiate College and the Orford Neighbourhood Hub would assist with the accommodation of our students.

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. [JCP scenario 2]*

Centre actions:

- Immediately contact the Awarding Body/Examination Board for instruction and advice
- Refer to the Critical incident Policy
- Where possible Year 11 will be prioritised for continuing Education and Examinations within the building.
- Our relationship with Warrington Collegiate College and the Orford Neighbourhood Hub would assist with the accommodation of our students

9. 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. [JCP scenario 5]*

Centre actions:

- Each Awarding Body to be informed in line with the Examinations that are not able to be taken.
- Refer to the Critical Incident Policy
- Where possible Year 11 will be prioritised for continuing Education and Examinations within the building.
- Our relationship with Warrington Collegiate College and the Orford Neighbourhood Hub would assist with the accommodation of our students

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. [JCP scenario 3]*

Centre actions:

- Prior to the Examinations period, all examination papers are logged as they arrive into school, the log is used to inform on arrivals and non-arrival of examination papers. In the unlikely event that a set of papers do not arrive within 5 working days of the exam, the Awarding Body/Examination Board is contacted.

11. 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:

- Immediately contact the Awarding Body/Examination Board
- Examination papers are kept under secure conditions at all times. Should the normal collection service fail, papers will be locked in the secure store overnight and the Exam Board notified. Where necessary the Examinations Officer will take the examination papers to the Post Office and Post using the Special Post system.

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]*

Centre actions:

- Immediately contact the Awarding Body/Examination Board for instruction and advice, then contact the students and parents.
- If student coursework is missing – Head of Centre to investigate with HOD and take appropriate actions.
- If student coursework is damaged in transit to moderator – collate evidence of coursework marks and teacher mark books. Where possible download a second copy of the coursework from the ICT System.

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. [JCP scenario 11]*

Centre actions:

- Contact the Awarding Body for guidance and advice.

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*

<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>

3.1 Scenario 1 – Disruption of teaching time – a significant number of centres are closed for an extended period

Type of scenario	Disruption to candidates ¹
Impact on	Teachers, candidates, parents and carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that a significant number of centres are closed, and candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning
Example of scenario	Severe flooding closes a significant number of centres in a region
Recommended actions	<p>Where there is disruption to teaching time and students miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare students for examinations as usual</p> <p>It is recommended that centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have contingency plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of learning, alternative venues or both - prioritise candidates who will be facing examinations shortly - advise candidates, where appropriate, to sit examinations in the next available series
Specific communication	The centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this
Success criteria	Students continue to be taught either through an alternative method of learning or at an alternative venue
Further advice and information	<p>Guidance on emergency planning, with <u>advice on severe weather</u>, is available from the Department for Education</p> <p>There is also <u>statutory guidance on school closures</u></p> <p>Further advice from the Department of Education Northern Ireland can be found in the Useful Information section of this document</p>

3.2 Scenario 2 – Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centres remain open

Type of scenario	Disruption to candidates
Impact on	School and college staff, teachers, candidates, parents and carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that candidates are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations as normal.
Example of scenario	A sickness bug means that a number of candidates are not able to attend a centre to take an examination.
Recommended actions	<p>It is recommended that centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations - offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series - apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements <p>Please note: candidates are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. If a candidate chooses not to sit an examination for other reasons they should be aware that special consideration rules will not apply</p>
Specific communication	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.
Success criteria	Candidates are able to sit examinations with minimum disruption or additional stress to them.
Further advice and information	JCQ's guidance on special consideration and alternative site arrangements can be accessed through the JCQ website .

Scenario 3 – Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Type of scenario	Transport or delivery
Impact on	Awarding organisation staff, teachers, candidates
When to implement the plan	In the event that there is a disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations.
Example of scenario	A courier delivers a wrong set of examination papers to a centre.
Recommended actions	<p>It is recommended that awarding organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - source alternative couriers for delivery of hard copies - provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network - fax examination papers to centres if electronic transfer is not possible.

	Please note that the examinations officer would need to ensure that copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions
Specific communication	The centre to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.
Success criteria	Students are able to proceed with taking examinations without having to reschedule examinations.
Further advice and information	not applicable

Scenario 4 – Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

Type of scenario	Transport or delivery
Impact on	Courier staff, centre staff, awarding organisation staff
When to implement the plan	In the event that there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts
Example of scenario	A courier contacts a centre to report a problem about picking up scripts on time
Recommended actions	It is recommended that centres: - in the first instance, seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection - do not make their own arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations - ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection
Specific communication	The centre to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to resolve the issue.
Success criteria	Scripts are stored 'securely' in line with JCQ guidance. Scripts are collected and delivered to awarding organisations with the minimum of delay
Further advice and information	JCQ guidance regarding the 'secure storage of scripts' is available on the JCQ website under Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2014-2015 Guidance on the 'Life of a script' is also available on the JCQ website

Scenario 5 – Centres are unable to open as normal during the examination period

Type of scenario	Disruption to centre
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, centre staff, parents, carers and awarding organisation staff

When to implement the plan	In the event that centres are unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.
Example of scenario	A fire at the centre means that it is closed when examinations are due to take place.
Recommended actions	It is recommended that centres: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 (see Scenario 3) - offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series, if possible
Specific communication	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
Success criteria	Students are able to take examinations in alternative venues in a timely way
Further advice and information	Centres should cover the impact on examinations as part of their general planning for emergencies The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre. The head is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether they are able to open. <u>DfE guidance on school closures</u> is available on the GOV.UK website

Scenario 6 – Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Type of scenario	Marking
Impact on	Candidates, teachers, school and college staff, parents, carers and awarding organisation staff
When to implement the plan	In the event of large scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it can be marked
Example of scenario	A fire at the centre destroys completed examination scripts
Recommended actions	It is recommended that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - awarding organisations 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 - candidates retake the assessment that has been affected at a subsequent assessment window, if possible
Specific communication	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
Success criteria	Candidate marks are able to be generated (if possible) from existing assessment materials

Further advice and information

To be sought from the relevant awarding organisation

Scenario 7 – Disruption to the scanning process – where completed examination scripts are being scanned in preparation for on-screen marking

Type of scenario	Marking
Impact on	Scanning centre staff, awarding organisation staff
When to implement the plan	In the event that there is disruption to the scanning process
Example of scenario	A scanning centre reports technical problems with scanning machines leading to delays
Recommended actions	It is recommended that awarding organisations: - awarding implement their existing contingency plans for disruption to on-screen marking process - revert to traditional forms of marking, recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers
Specific communication	None
Success criteria	Deadlines for marking schedules are met
Further advice and information	To be sought from the relevant awarding organisation

Scenario 8 – Markers unable to mark examination scripts according to marking schedules

Type of scenario	Marking
Impact on	Awarding organisation staff
When to implement the plan	In the event that a significant number of markers are unable to mark examination scripts, resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates
Example of scenario	Significant numbers of markers withdraw from a specific qualification at short notice
Recommended actions	It is recommended that awarding organisations: - reallocate scripts to available markers - recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers - contact each other to 'share' markers for specific qualifications - prioritise marking based on results dates, UCAS deadlines, qualifications that require further study (eg maths and English)
Specific communication	None
Success criteria	Deadlines for marking schedules are met
Further advice and information	not applicable

Scenario 9 – Difficulty in meeting planned schedule or unable to issue results

Type of scenario	Issuing results
Impact on	Awarding organisation staff, candidates, parents and carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that an awarding organisation (including the case of a single awarding organisation) is unable to meet a planned schedule for issuing results, due to a catastrophic process or systems failure
Example of scenario	A process failure delays both the preparation and issuing of results
Recommended actions	<p>If awarding organisations face delays in meeting the planned schedule for issuing results, it is recommended that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish priorities for processing results in line with UCAS and Central Applications Office ² (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
Specific communication	Awarding organisation(s) to brief schools and colleges about potential delays to issuing results
Success criteria	Deadlines for issuing results to candidates are met
Further advice and information	not applicable

3.10 Scenario 10 – Awarding organisations unable to issue accurate results

Type of scenario	Issuing results
Impact on	Awarding organisation staff, school and college staff, candidates, parents and carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that a catastrophic system error, failure or attack on systems means a significant number of results cannot be validated as accurate, or are issued and found to be inaccurate
Example of scenario	An IT system failure impacts upon the accuracy of results
Recommended actions	<p>It is recommended that awarding organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - revalidate results - reissue results, via an alternative format if necessary
Specific communication	<p>Awarding organisations to inform schools, colleges and candidates of any incorrect results</p> <p>Awarding organisations to advise UCAS and CAO about any issues with incorrect results that may impact on their deadlines</p>

Success criteria	Results are revalidated or reissued in a timely way for candidates
Further advice and information	not applicable

3.11 Scenario 11 – Centres are unable to distribute results as normal

Type of scenario	Issuing results
Impact on	Awarding organisation staff, school and college staff, candidates, parents and carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that schools or colleges are unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates
Example of scenario	A school or college is closed and therefore candidates are not able to visit to find out their results
Recommended actions	It is recommended that schools and colleges: - make arrangements to access results at an alternative site - share facilities with other schools and colleges if possible
Specific communication	Centres to contact awarding organisations about alternative options
Success criteria	Candidates receive results in a timely way
Further advice and information	not applicable

3.12 Scenario 12 – Awarding organisations are unable to offer post results services

Type of scenario	Post results services
Impact on	Awarding organisation staff, centre staff, candidates, parents and carers
When to implement the plan	In the event that awarding organisations are not able to provide post results services, with centres and candidates unable to access services such as enquiries about results and appeals
Example of scenario	A systems failure shuts down an awarding organisation's online post results service
Recommended actions	It is recommended that awarding organisations: - make arrangements to provide post results services for centres and candidates through alternative methods (eg paper, Excel spreadsheets, traditional re-marking) - prioritise candidates going through UCAS or CAO
Specific communication	Awarding organisations inform centres and UCAS or CAO about the implications of not providing this service
Success criteria	Candidates are offered a post results service using alternative methods in a timely way

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>