



Exam Contingency Plan 2021/22

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Reviewed by	J Bates – 12/11/2021
Approved by	B Howes
Date of next review	September 2022

Key staff involved in the emergency evacuation policy/procedure:

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	R Shell-Macleod
Exams Officer	S Khatoon
SLT member(s)	R Bakewell, B Howes, G Patel, S Afzal, D Yeates, P Lewis, P Coleby, J Sargent
SENCo	Damien Evans

Purpose of the plan

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exams process at City 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

1. *Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland* which provides guidance in the publication
2. *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted.*
3. *JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*
4. *JCQ notice Preparing for disruption to examinations (effective from 11 October 2021)*

This plan also confirms City Academy is compliant with the JCQ regulation *General Regulations for Approved Centres (section 5.3)* that the centre *has in place 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 staff absence. The examination contingency plan reinforces procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency.*

Possible causes of 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*
- ▶ *insufficient invigilators recruited*

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

- ▶ *invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions for conducting 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, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration*
- ▶ *candidates' scripts not dispatched as required for marking 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- ▶ SKH in collaboration with RSM as Head of Centre, will cover the outlined roles. This may include support from the other Exams Officers within the trust.
- ▶ Mock assessments to be undertaken under exam conditions. Mock inspection during these examinations to be undertaken by an experienced exams officer within the trust
- ▶ Invigilation to be supported by each academy within the trust. Use of agency staff if necessary to be restricted to one agency, thus enabling a strong partnership that supports the training needs of the invigilation staff
- ▶ SKH has a duplicate set of keys for the exam's cupboard and safe keys for invigilators to access scripts. Invigilators are aware of seating plans and clashes – step by step instructions are in the invigilators handbook which will be in every exam room and given to all invigilators at the start of the academic year. Training will also be given to invigilators.
- ▶ Seating plans and lists of students are available in staff shared area and exam folder. Exam timetable given to all staff before exam season starts.

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*
- ▶ *centre fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010*
- ▶ *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*
- ▶ *centre-delegated arrangements not put in place*
- ▶ *modified paper requirements not identified in a timely manner to enable ordering to meet external deadline*

- ▶ *staff (facilitators) providing support to access arrangement candidates not allocated and trained*

Exam time

- ▶ *access arrangement candidate support not arranged for exam rooms*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ RSM as Head of Centre, in collaboration with SKH as Exams Officer, will cover the outlined roles until the SENCo's return. Other SENCo's within the trust to be called upon as and when necessary.

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*
- ▶ *Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled*
- ▶ *Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding body and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking*

Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding body submission deadlines

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- ▶ Heads of Department to be aware of all exam deadlines. Heads of Department to check and sign off entry mark-sheets before deadlines
- ▶ Non-examination assessment outlined in the curriculum calendar; events are set at the beginning of the academic year and given to curriculum board.
- ▶ Information regarding adjustments to NEA to be circulated by the Exams Officer.
- ▶ Candidates are to sign that they give permission that their mark be sent to the awarding body; Exams Officer keeps a tracker of this evidence and marks will not be submitted without a signature from the student

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ A member of support staff is set as an on call invigilator for each exam
- ▶ Invigilators employed by the school are trained regularly, both by the academy and utilising the resources provided by The Exams Office

- ▶ Invigilators are used for the mock exam process, thus training is current and appropriate. This also aids retention of staff
- ▶ Invigilators to be provided with a timetable well in advance of each season, enabling an early commitment to the required dates
- ▶ Support from the other CORE academies for invigilation will be called upon where necessary
- ▶ Agency staff and support staff can be used

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Room booked and assessed with low risk for natural disasters
- ▶ Other rooms are kept on “stand by” if room is insufficient during an exam

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*
- ▶ *A2C failure*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ *Final entry deadline*
 - ▶ Make every effort to avoid entries on last day of deadline
 - ▶ Make paper exam entries – details of paper entries are kept on file. These can then be used to make entries via the exam board’s websites
 - ▶ Should the MIS system be unavailable due to academy comms or other constraints within the academy, being web-based work could be completed at another CORE academy.
- ▶ *MIS system failure during exams preparation*
 - ▶ Alert support desk as soon as possible
 - ▶ Should the MIS system be unavailable due to academy comms or other constraints within the academy, being web-based work could be completed at another CORE academy.
 - ▶ In the unlikely event of the MIS system being unavailable everywhere for a prolonged period of time when seating plans etc. are required, mail merge could be used instead. To facilitate this, data from the MIS to be taken at regular intervals
- ▶ *MIS system failure at results release time*
 - ▶ Depending on the failure, another academy within the trust to be utilised

- ▶ If necessary, results to be downloaded from board's websites and mail merge used to produce a consolidated result slip, or individual statements of results to be printed from each board

A2C failure

- ▶ IT technician to be available and familiar with A2C installation
- ▶ A2C to be tested at regular intervals

7. Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down)

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Invigilators, Exams Officer and SLT aware of exam room lock down procedures: step by step instructions are in the invigilator folder in every exam room; lock down training given to invigilators before every exam season
- ▶ Invigilators, Exams Officer and SLT aware of exam room fire procedures; student told procedure at the start of every exam; step by step instructions are in the invigilator folder in every exam room
- ▶ Adequate fire alarms and all in working order; security of exam must be maintained

8. 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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Make all efforts to keep centre open
- ▶ Take advice and/or follow instruction from local or national government when deciding if the academy should close.
- ▶ Consider limited opening of the academy to students with upcoming exams should that be appropriate
- ▶ Use MS Teams to deliver remote learning if necessary. The academy had experience of this in 2020, and classes are maintained in Teams and currently used within the academy.
- ▶ Take into account the provision for students with upcoming exams in the design of any remote learning timetable
- ▶ Consider use of alternative venues, including other centres within the trust

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*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ JCQ and exam boards will be informed and the correct documents completed so the test can be completed at a different CORE school
- ▶ Usual alternative site rules to be implemented should the candidate be unable to attend ANY school (i.e. take exam at home or in hospital)
- ▶ Special consideration to be implemented where appropriate
- ▶ Communicate changes to students and parents
- ▶ Candidate to be advised to sit examination in the next series, where appropriate

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*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Communicate changes with students and parents
- ▶ JCQ and exam boards will be informed and the correct documents completed so the test can be completed at a different CORE school
- ▶ Alternative sites to be considered should all CORE schools be closed
- ▶ Advice to be sought from exam boards
- ▶ Offer candidates the opportunity to sit any missed examinations at the next available series, where appropriate

11. Disruption in the distribution of exam papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Exam papers will kept in the fireproof safe and kept sealed until in the exam room and only opened by an invigilator or the exams officer – a witness will sign for proof of this on ‘Second Pair of Eyes’ log
- ▶ The Centre would work with the boards to implement their replacement process, be that physical or electronic paper delivery

12. Disruption to the transportation of completed exam scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Exam papers will kept in the fireproof safe and kept sealed until in the exam room and only opened by an invigilator or the exams officer – a witness will sign for proof of this on ‘Second Pair of Eyes’ log

- ▶ The Centre would inform the exam board of any delays they had not received communication on, and follow instructions as provided by the board, making sure of secure storage until such time as transportation can be arranged
- ▶ Should any rescheduling be undertaken by the boards, communicate this to stakeholders

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*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Scripts packed and sealed in examination room then kept in fireproof safe until collected, including overnight if necessary
- ▶ Assessment evidence to be kept in fireproof safe

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 to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ SLT and Exams Officer will issue results to student through an online access area. Students will need an email and password to view confidential grades
- ▶ Results will be issued to candidates at another CORE school if building is unsafe due to health and safety

15. Adverse weather conditions

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *Possible delay of start to exam*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Check weather reports
- ▶ Inform Exam Board regarding delay to start/cancellation of exam; keep candidates isolated; apply for special consideration

16. Student taken ill during exam

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *Possible disruption to other students*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Invigilators aware of policy; Exams Officer/First Aider called; special consideration for all students

17. Student caught cheating/being disruptive during exam

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *Possible disruption to other students*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Invigilators report and log the problem; A warning to candidate(s) involved
- ▶ Exams Officer and SLT to deal with malpractice issues if continued after warning; malpractice form completed and sent to exam board

18. Student late for exam

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *Student could miss an exam*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Reception to inform attendance of late arrival; Exams Officer to collect student from Reception
- ▶ Centre's discretion as to whether student can sit exam; very late students need to be reported
- ▶ If student is sitting the exam, they are to be briefed and accompanied into the exam room by the Exams Officer

19. Student(s) isolating due to contracting an infectious disease

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *Student could miss an exam*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Candidates informed on how to report their absence on the day of an exam and the evidence required
- ▶ Special consideration for students affected

20. Widespread absence of staff/students due to a health emergency e.g. Covid-19

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *Students could miss multiple exams*
- ▶ *Lack of invigilators/Academy staff*
- ▶ *Exams cancelled or postponed*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Candidates informed on how to report their absence on the day of an exam and the evidence required
- ▶ Special consideration for students affected

- ▶ Government guidance followed regarding conducting exams safely and/or exams being cancelled/postponed; Exams Officer and Data Manager keep up to date with government/exam board guidance
- ▶ Exam-related documents kept in shared folder so they can be accessed by any available staff member
- ▶ All SLT and senior staff familiar with general exam regulations so they can step in to conduct exams if necessary
- ▶ Multiple Academy staff trained as invigilators and good links with agencies for acquiring invigilators at short notice

21. Cyber attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- ▶ *Digital records of evidence and students' marks/grades are lost through IT issues e.g. server failure*
- ▶ *Digital records of students' marks/grades are tampered with through hacking*

Centre actions to mitigate the impact of the disruption

- ▶ Records will be kept on the school server but backed up onto a hard drive
- ▶ Paper copies of records will also be kept in a fireproof safe