

## **Adverse Disruption to Examinations - Advice for Centres**

*Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for centres in regards to any adverse disruption to examination conduct.*

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### **Background**

1. The following is a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for centres (schools/colleges) in regards to preparing for any potential disruption to examination conduct and forms part of your annual review of your examination contingency arrangements.
2. Whilst this list of FAQs is not exhaustive and does not replace the relevant JCQ guidance, it does provide an overview of the key issues for consideration in preparing for potential examination disruption.
3. This advice is for the Heads of Centre and Examinations Officers.

### **Who should I contact if examination conduct is disrupted?**

4. Heads of Centre or Examinations Officers should contact the CCEA Helpline on **028 9026 1260** if examination conduct is adversely disrupted. Your enquiry will be directed to the appropriate person.

### **What examination contingencies do centres need to consider?**

5. Centres should consider contingencies required to ensure they are ready and able to administer examinations in a consistent and secure fashion, thereby helping to maintain the integrity of the assessment process.
6. Failure to plan appropriate contingencies could adversely affect candidates, either at the centre or potentially, in the event of a breach of question paper security, at a national or international level.
7. It is the Head of Centres responsibility to ensure they plan appropriately to ensure that their centres adhere to the latest version of the General Regulations for Approved Centres 2018-2019.

8. The examinations officer is the person appointed by the Head of Centre to act on behalf of, and be the main point of contact for, the centre in matters relating to the general administration of examinations and assessments.
9. The priority when planning and implementing examination contingencies will be to ensure that all assessments are delivered to published timetables and in a safe manner.
10. It is the centre's responsibility to provide suitable accommodation and facilities for all examinations and assessments, including centre-assessed work, computer-based and on-screen assessments, ensuring that the work submitted is that of the candidate alone using only the items/materials specified. Centres should consider contingency arrangements should suitable accommodation be at risk of disruption.
11. Centres must immediately advise CCEA in the advent of disruption to examination conduct.

### **What advice should a centre give to examination candidates in the event of a disruption on the day of an examination?**

12. As part of an examination contingency plan, centres should always advise candidates what they must do in the event of an unexpected disruption, either when travelling to an examination facility or during an examination.
13. In the first instance, candidates should always contact their centre (school) for advice and guidance.
14. Centres should have a designated point of contact available to candidates in the advent of disruption to a centre.
15. Centres should make candidates aware of the designated point of contact prior to the examinations series commencing.

### **What flexibility is available to vary a published examination start time?**

16. Instructions for Conducting Examinations (JCQ - Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2018-2019, 2018), Section 6.3, p.9. outlined below, allows limited flexibility with starting times:

*“The JCQ awarding bodies allow centres in the UK to start examinations by up to 30 minutes earlier than, or later than, the published starting time for*

*the session, without the need to complete any paperwork. Prior permission from an awarding body is not required.”*

17. Where this policy is followed, to avoid any possible breach of security, the late-arriving candidates or early departing candidates **must** be supervised as if the published starting time had been in place.
18. To maintain the security of the examinations during this period, all candidates for CCEA general qualifications examinations must start:
  - a. question papers scheduled for a morning session no earlier than 8:45 am and no later than 9:45 am;
  - b. question papers scheduled for an afternoon session no earlier than 1:00 pm and no later than 2.00 pm;
19. If a candidate has an examination clash, please refer to Section 7, pp.11-12 of the Instructions for Conducting Examinations booklet.

### **If a candidate arrives very late, i.e. one hour after the published examination start time, what should I do?**

20. In cases of very late arrivals, centres should always refer to the JCQ ‘Guidance notes concerning Very Late Arrivals’ (JCQ - Guidance notes concerning Very Late Arrivals, 2018).
21. A candidate will be considered a very late arrival if:
  - a. they arrive more than one hour after the published starting time; and
  - b. The examination is more than one hour in length.
22. For examinations of less than one hour, a candidate will be considered very late if:
  - a. they arrive after the published finishing time for the examination; or
  - b. 30 minutes after the published starting time, whichever is later.
23. A candidate who arrives after the start of the examination should be allowed to enter the examination room and sit the examination.
24. Ultimately, it is for CCEA to determine whether it can accept the script for very late arrivals. The integrity of the examination paper, will be paramount in these considerations.

## What can I do if I do not have a full complement of invigilators to cover all examinations?

25. In the event that an invigilator is unavoidably delayed or unable to get to an examination centre, school staff can be used to invigilate provided that:
- There are at least 1-2 other independent invigilators in the examination hall; and
  - The member of the school staff is not a subject specialist and has not taught the candidates for the examination that is being examined.
26. An agreement must be sought from CCEA for this arrangement.

## What if there is a major disruption in the area of my centre (school or college)?

27. If a Head of Centre determines that major disruption is possible in the area around the centre and it is more appropriate to situate the examination(s) at an alternative venue, the Head of Centre or Examinations Officer (acting on the Head of Centre's behalf) **must** inform CCEA using the JCQ Alternative Site form.
28. This form can be downloaded from the JCQ website:  
<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms/guidance-notes-on-alternative-site-arrangements>
29. The completed form(s) should be sent to CCEA, Centre Support by Friday 26th April 2019.
30. Question papers and examination stationery must remain in the secure storage facilities at the centre's registered address, approved by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service, until as late as possible before the published starting time for the examination.
31. Question papers and examination stationery **must** be transported to the examination venue by an authorised member of centre staff.
32. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all question papers and examination stationery are transported in a secure manner.
33. If the Head of Centre decides that some candidates should take their examination at an alternative centre, CCEA **must** be advised of this arrangement.

## **In the event that ParcelForce cannot collect completed candidate scripts as scheduled from my centre, what can I do?**

34. In the first instance, centres should seek advice from CCEA.
35. Centres should **not** make their own arrangements for transportation without prior approval.
36. Centres should ensure secure storage of completed examination papers, in line with JCQ guidelines until collection.

## **If, despite best efforts, a candidate cannot make it into school to take their examination, what can I do?**

37. Supplementary examination papers will **not** be provided in the event that a candidate cannot make the published examination date and time.
38. If this is not the candidate's terminal series, they will have another opportunity to sit the examination in the next scheduled examination series where the examination is available.
39. Where this is the candidate's terminal series, centres can apply to CCEA for special consideration, where the candidate has met the minimum requirements.
40. Candidates are only eligible for special consideration if:
  - a. they have been fully prepared, and
  - b. have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control at the time of the examination.
41. If a candidate chooses not to sit an examination for another reason, they should be aware that special consideration rules **will not apply**.

## Bibliography

43. JCQ, 2018. *Guidance notes concerning Very Late Arrivals*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/Download/exams-office/online-forms/guidance-notes-concerning-very-late-arrivals>  
[Accessed 27 02 2019].
44. JCQ, 2018. *Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2018-2019*. [Online]  
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