

EXAM CONTINGENCY POLICY

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This policy describes the potential risks and issues that may cause disruption to the management and administration of examinations that take place at Yeovil College. By reviewing the procedures to be followed in the case of disruption, it is intended to reduce the impact that these disruptions will have on our examinations.

Implementing this policy will safeguard the interests of candidates whilst maintaining the integrity of the examination system and qualification standards. This policy has been created in consultation with the *Causes of Potential Disruption to the Exam Process as outlined in the Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and other relevant *Joint Council for Qualifications* or *Awarding Body* guidance.

SCOPE

The Exams Contingency Policy has been created to ensure that a consistent and effective response, in the event of major disruption, is implemented cross college irrelevant of number of awarding bodies that may potentially be affected. When required the College will liaise directly with awarding bodies to ensure that disruptions to candidates are kept to a minimum. This policy aims to complement awarding body contingency plans.

The policy will be implemented in the event of major disruptions to the working of the College such as bad weather, widespread illness, power failures or student record system failures. The policy may be implemented on the advice of local/national emergency services, the local authority or other external agencies.

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

In the event of disruption, communication to staff and candidates will be managed as stipulated in the Adverse Weather Procedure and Business Continuity Plan documents that can be accessed via the staff portal. General notifications to staff, learners and parents will be issued via the College website and direct texts to learners and the CMT cascade of information to staff will be instigated.

Causes of Potential Disruption to the Exam Process

1. Examinations Officer extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)

The Examinations department is structured with an Examinations Officer, Examinations Administrators and Invigilators; if the Examinations Officer is absent for an extended period and to ensure that all tasks are completed, then the following will apply:

- The Head of MIS will assume direct management of the Examinations department.
- The Head of MIS will appoint temporary direct management of the Examinations department to the Deputy Head of MIS.

If further advice and guidance is required then the responsible staff member should contact the relevant awarding body directly or consult the JCQ rules and regulations handbook.

2. Invigilators – lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

The invigilator “Bank” of staff is generally recruited externally and receives initial/update training during the year to ensure compliance with JCQ and awarding body rules and regulations. Minor invigilation issues on the day of an exam can be covered by the College business support staff (including the Registry and Exams teams) and the external invigilator bank.

For examinations with large volumes of learners e.g. GCSE English and Maths, trained invigilators and trained business support/teaching staff will assist with invigilation duties as required as long as JCQ rules and regulations are adhered to.

3. Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

There are two exam rooms; approximate capacity of 60 candidates, which are dedicated to the administration of examinations, these rooms cannot be booked by other college departments. Where further rooms may be required, the exams department will liaise with the Registry team to book appropriate non timetabled rooms. If rooms are unavailable then:

- Teaching classes will be moved to accommodate examinations.
- The college will potentially consider closing the campus to accommodate high volume examinations such as GCSE English and Maths exams.

4. Failure of IT systems – IT software update issues and on-demand issues

- Ensure On-Demand software is installed on all computers in readiness for exams.
- Co-ordinate with the IT team on the Friday prior to the week of online examinations.
- Liaise with the IT team on the morning of the exam to ensure that all systems are ready for the exam
- Computer reader files are imported by Exams Officer, then IT team import into selected exam login accounts

5. Disruption of teaching time – Centre closed for an extended period

If the college is closed due to business continuity issues and candidates are unable to attend examinations for an extended period then the following options will be explored:

- Explore alternative examination location options (In line with JCQ regulations).
- Sit the examination in the next available series.
- Communicate via text/the College website any adjustments to exam locations/timings.

6. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – Centre remains open

If candidates are unable to attend examinations at the College due to extreme issues then the College will:

- Potentially arrange alternative location ensuring compliance with awarding body regulations.
- Offer candidates the opportunity to sit the examination in another series.
- Apply for candidate special considerations if the crisis event happened during an exam.

7. Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period

If the College is unable to open as normal during the exams period the College will:

- Consider an alternative building to locate the exams.
- Consider an alternative location in liaison with the relevant awarding body.
- Liaise with candidates in line with the Business Continuity procedure.
- Reschedule examinations where possible.
- Offer candidates the opportunity to sit the examination in another series.

8. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

If the distribution of exam papers is disrupted then the College will:

- Liaise with the appropriate awarding body to access examination papers electronically, print and store as per JCQ regulations.
- Arrange alternative courier distribution to centres with the appropriate awarding body.

9. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

If there is a disruption with the transportation of completed examination scripts to awarding bodies the College will:

- Liaise with the awarding body and Parcel Force to resolve any distribution issues.
- Securely store all examination papers until confirmation of collection as per awarding body regulations.
- Update user defined fields in ProSolution to ensure that exam papers received are tracked in the student records database.

10. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

If there is damage or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessments before they can be distributed to the awarding body, the college will:

- Notify the awarding body immediately.
- Liaise with the awarding body to resolve or supply further examples of candidates work.
- Ensure that candidates are given opportunities to retake the appropriate examinations.

11. Awarding organisations unable to issue results

If awarding bodies are unable to meet the planned schedule for issuing results the College will:

- Liaise with the awarding body to ascertain the scale of the disruption.
- Communicate to candidates through the college website, text message or telephone calls.

- Ensure that the appropriate awarding bodies liaise with UCAS to reduce the disruption to candidates.

12. Centre unable to distribute results as normal

If the College is unable to meet the planned schedule for issuing results, we will:

- Liaise with the awarding body to notify them of the disruption.
- Potentially arrange for candidates to access results from a different location/building.
- Potentially arrange for candidates to access post results services from a different location/building.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS, DEFINITIONS

- Adverse Weather Procedure (Available on the staff portal)
- Emergency Plan (Available on the staff portal)
- Business Continuity Plan 2017 (Available on the staff portal)
- Business Continuity Plan Appendices (Available on the staff portal)
- Controlled Assessments Policy

| Policy Review | | | | |
|---------------|---|--|---------------|---------------|
| Author/Owner | Position | Approved by Corporation | Approval date | Review date |
| Stephen Pyle | Head of Student Data, Funding & Customer Service (incl Exams) | Signed:  | 07.12.17 | December 2019 |

Document Control – Revision History (Policies only)

| Author/Owner | Summary of Changes | Date | Date last reviewed by SED | Recommend to SED Y/N |
|--------------|--------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Stephen Pyle | New Policy | 03.10.17 | - | Yes |
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| Initial Equality Impact Screening | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
| Have you consulted on this policy? Yes Details: All staff members of the Examinations team have reviewed and contributed to this policy during team meetings. | | | |
| What evidence has been used for this assessment? Team meeting notes/minutes/emails. | | | |
| Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way? Indicate Y where applicable | | | |
| Group | Negative impact | Positive impact | Evidence |
| Age | | | |
| Disability | | | |
| Gender (incl. Transgender) | | | |
| Race (incl. Gypsy & Traveller) | | | |
| Religion or belief | | | |
| Sex | | | |
| Sexual orientation | | | |
| Marriage & civil partnership | | | |
| Pregnancy & maternity | | | |
| Other groups (see guidance) | | | |
| Please give details: | | | |
| If any negative impacts are identified, are there any related policies, services, strategies, procedures or functions that need to be assessed alongside this screening? If yes, please detail below: | | | |
| Should the policy proceed to a full Equality Impact Assessment? No If no, please give reasons: The exams contingency plan details the actions to be taken following certain circumstances; the policy does not envisage affecting specific groups of learners. | | | |
| Declaration We are satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out on this policy and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the College and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment | | | |
| Completed by Author: Stephen Pyle Position: Head of Student Data, Funding & Customer Service Date: 03.10.17 | | | |
| Reviewed by Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity Group: Date: 07.11.17 | | | |
| Comments from Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity Group Review: | | | |

