



Examination contingency plan

Cathedral Schools Trust

[Bristol Cathedral Choir School]

December 2025

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Purpose of the plan

This policy sets out the exam contingency plan for Cathedral Schools Trust. Section 6 sets out the exam contingency plan for Bristol Cathedral Choir School.

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 complies with the [Joint Council for Qualifications \(JCQ\) General Regulations for Approved Centres](#), where it is stated that “Centres should prepare plans for any disruption to examinations as part of their general emergency planning. It is important to ensure that the relevant centre staff are familiar with the plan. Consideration should be given as to how these arrangements will be communicated to candidates, parents and staff should disruption to examinations occur.”

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
- Designated staff member unable to access exam materials
- *Results and post-results*
 - access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
 - the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions:

- Head of Centre to appoint a member of the administrative staff to take over responsibilities **should the absence** of EO have the potential to affect the meeting of deadlines.
- Staff **members** work closely with EO to ensure they are up to date with the exam cycle and responsibilities at each point in time. This will be done under the supervision of the Deputy Head and Head of Centre.
- Head of Centre to make contact with lead invigilators
- Estates to be the secondary key holder(s) to the Exams Office and exams secure storage.
- Head of Centre or designated administrative staff to book exam script collections via Parcelforce.

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:

- Head of centre responsible for **ensuring the position** is filled should absence have the potential to disrupt exam preparation.
- EO to ensure access arrangements are in place by spring term of Year 10 for all students where possible.
- EO to plan access arrangements for exam days in advance of the summer series, in consultation with SENCo.

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:

- EO responsible for ensuring deadlines are met for estimated entries. Any omissions to be referred to the Head of Centre.
- The Head of Centre responsible for ensuring the priority for teaching is the examination cohort and staff will be covered in good time, by trained professionals, in all circumstances.

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:

- EO responsible for recruitment of invigilators in the exam series. Advance planning required to ensure enough are available.
- Head of Centre or Deputy Head to be informed if recruitment is necessary.
- Cover supervisors and other Administrative Staff to also receive updated exam invigilator training to ensure backup is available in case of invigilator absence.

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:

- EO responsible for ensuring planning of rooms is completed by the Spring term to identify potential rooming issues.
- Alternative venues within the school to be made available by teaching staff in the event of an unexpected incident.
- Scope external venues in early 2025 for extra accommodation.
- Head of Centre to liaise with EO to ensure no disruption due to room shortage.

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:

- **EO to contact awarding bodies directly to arrange alternative methods of information exchange.**
- **Head of Centre to be informed.**

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**

Centre actions:

- **Centre to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruptions to teaching time and plans to address this.**
- **Head of centre responsible for finding alternative venue/methods of learning**
- **Priority given to the exam cohort.**
- **EO to contact awarding bodies for advice regarding special consideration. (Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 1)**

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**

Centre actions:

- **EO to communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue.**
- **EO to liaise with students and parents to find alternative venue /advice on next opportunity to sit examination (where applicable)**
- **EO to apply for special consideration where they have met the minimum requirements. (Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 2)**

9. *Centre unable to open as normal during the exams period (e.g. adverse weather)

- **Criteria for implementation of the plan**
- **Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations**

Centre actions:

- **Open for candidates only if possible.**
- **EO and SLT member to be on site.**
- **EO to inform relevant awarding organisations.**
- **Use alternative venue, in agreement with awarding bodies if necessary**
- **EO to apply for special consideration where candidates have met the minimum requirements.**

- Offer students the opportunity to sit the next series – if possible. *(Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 5)*
- If exams are cancelled UK wide, follow OFQUAL contingency plan.
- Where exams go ahead country wide but BCCS pupils not allowed on site, contact exam board(s) for guidance)

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

Centre actions:

- EO to communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery arrangements. *(Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 3)*

11. *Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts

*Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions:

- EO to communicate with awarding bodies for approval of alternative delivery arrangements. *(Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 4)*

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

Centre actions:

- EO to communicate with awarding bodies immediately.
- Student marks to be submitted based on appropriate evidence.
- Candidate offered the opportunity to retake if possible. *(Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 6)*

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

Centre actions:

- EO to make arrangements to access results at an alternative site.
- Share facilities with other schools and colleges if possible.
- EO to contact awarding organisations about alternative options. *(Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) scenario 11)*

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* (details of which can be found on the next page)

Exam rooms - lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice

If Gym was unavailable:

Plan A; Use of Trinity Hall, Parsonage downstairs, Library, Cresswell Theatre as alternatives

Plan B; Use of Hall in CPS and music room

Plan C; (External) Use of Trinity Schools or St Kats facilities

Past experience; we have used We the Curious and City Hall rooms when areas were not available and we have requested these before at late notice.

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>

Version control

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1	29 November 2023	Education Standards Committee	Members of CST, every Trustee, each Local Governor, all Cathedral Schools Trust employees and volunteers and others at the discretion of the Chairman of the Trustees of CST. CST Website updated and emailed to parents.	Annual Review
2	12 December 2024	Education and Standards Committee		Annual Review
3	4 December 2025	Education and Standards Committee		Annual Review

Approvals (Annual)

Version	Date	Approved by
1	11 December 2023	CST Trustees
2	12 December 2024	CST Trustees
3	4 December 2025	CST Trustees
Date for next review of this policy	December 2026	