

IAB Awarding Organisation Contingency Plan

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Introduction

IAB, as a regulated awarding organisation has specific responsibilities under the regulators' conditions of recognition – with regard to:

Assessment planning

The IAB Awarding Organisation (hereafter referred to as the Awarding Organisation) must:

1. Establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, an up-to-date, written contingency plan.
2. Ensure that the arrangements in place with centres and other third parties enable them to deliver and award qualifications in accordance with their conditions of recognition.

In the event of disruption

The Awarding Organisation must:

1. Take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse effect, in relation to their qualifications, arising from any disruption.
2. Provide effective guidance to any of their centres delivering qualifications.
3. Ensure that where an assessment must be completed under specified conditions, learners complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any reasonable adjustments or special considerations require alternative conditions).
4. Promptly notify the relevant regulators about any event which could have an adverse effect on learners, standards or public confidence.
5. Coordinate its communications with the relevant regulators where the disruption has an impact on multiple centres or a wide range of learners.

This contingency plan is:

- based on the [JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#)
- aimed at IAB approved centres
- designed to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the examination system affecting significant numbers of learners.

The plan will be implemented in the event of major disruption to the system, such as widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather or power failures. Any actions taken will be subject to the advice of the official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example the police, Environment Agency or Public Health England and will be coordinated, as appropriate, with the Department for Education and qualification regulators Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA.

Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of learners while maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards.

The contingencies applied will be selected based on the context of the disruption and may have been implemented on other occasions in response to localised issues. They would be applied on a larger scale in response to any widespread disruption at a national level.

The priority when implementing contingencies will be to maintain three principles:

- delivering assessments to scheduled dates
- delivering results in a timely manner
- complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.

Communications

In the event of major disruption, the Awarding Organisation must notify the regulator of anything that impacts their individual ability to operate. Communication is a key factor in ensuring an effective and consistent response across the agencies involved. This includes communications users such as centres and learners.

At the first indication of such an event, the Awarding Organisation is required to notify the regulators.

The regulators, Ofqual in England, Qualifications Wales in Wales and CCEA in Northern Ireland, will share timely and accurate information, as required, with awarding organisations, government departments and other stakeholders. The Department for Education in England, the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and the Welsh Government will inform the relevant government ministers as soon as it becomes apparent that there will be significant local or national disruption and ensure that they are kept updated until the matter is resolved.

The Awarding Organisation will alert relevant professional bodies or employer groups if the impact of disruption particularly affects them.

The Awarding Organisation is committed to:

- sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan
- communicating with users so they are aware of disruption to assessments, the contingency measures being implemented, and any actions required of them as a result
- ensuring that any messages to the users are clear and accurate.

Contingency Plan

| Event or circumstance | Criteria for implementation of the contingency plan | Actions |
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| 1. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – centres are closed for an extended period | Centres are closed or learners are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning. | <p>Where there is disruption and learners miss teaching and learning time, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare learners, as usual, for assessments.</p> <p>In the case of IAB courses, centres may reschedule assessments provided that they give the Awarding Organisation a minimum of two weeks' notice.</p> <p>Centres should have plans in place to facilitate learning by alternative methods (e.g. distance learning under the direct supervision of a tutor).</p> |
| 2. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers | Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations. | <p>The Awarding Organisation may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek alternative couriers for delivery • change the timing of the distribution to earlier or later than originally scheduled. <p>Centres need to ensure that examination papers are stored under secure conditions.</p> |
| 3. Learners unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centres remain open | Learners are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations as normal. | <p>Centres to invoke centre contingency plan – this must focus on options that enable learners to take their assessments.</p> <p>The Awarding Organisation will ensure that any applications for special considerations as a result of disruption will be reviewed to ensure consistency of decision making.</p> |

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| <p>4. Centres are unable to open as normal</p> | <p>Centres unable to open as normal for scheduled assessments</p> | <p>Centres to invoke centre contingency plan – this must focus on options that enable learners to take their assessments.</p> <p>As part of general planning for emergencies, centres should cover the impact on assessments. 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 the centre is able to open.</p> <p>The Awarding Organisation will ensure that any applications for special considerations as a result of disruption will be reviewed to ensure consistency of decision making.</p> |
| <p>5. Disruption to transporting examination scripts</p> | <p>Delay in normal delivery arrangements for examination scripts/assessment evidence.</p> | <p>Centres should investigate alternative dispatch options that comply with the Awarding Organisation’s security requirements.</p> <p>Centres to ensure secure storage of examination scripts/assessment evidence until dispatch.</p> |
| <p>6. Assessment evidence is not available to be marked</p> | <p>Large scale damage to, or destruction of, examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked.</p> <p>Examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations.</p> | <p>The Awarding Organisation to generate learner marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of learner achievement as defined by the Awarding Organisation.</p> <p>Where marks cannot be generated by the Awarding Organisation, learners may need to retake affected assessment at the next available opportunity.</p> |
| <p>7. Markers unable to mark examination papers according to marking schedules</p> | <p>Markers are unable to mark examination papers resulting in a risk to the delivery of results to deadlines.</p> | <p>The Awarding Organisation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • re-allocate scripts to available markers • recruit and train qualified additional markers • prioritise according to results deadlines. |

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| 8. Difficulty in processing results | Significant inability to process results. | <p>The Awarding Organisation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notify the regulators of any such instance • establish priorities for results processing • implement existing contingency plans for disruption to results processing • assess level of disruption and consider options for issuing results in alternative format(s). |
| 9. Awarding Organisation unable to issue results as planned | Awarding Organisation unable to distribute electronic results due to failure of systems facilitating results delivery. | <p>Where results are due to be issued electronically – the Awarding Organisation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implement existing contingency plans for disruption to the issuing of results • transmit results via alternative electronic formats • issue hard-copy results. |
| | Awarding Organisation unable to distribute hard-copy results | <p>Where results are due to be issued in hard copy – the Awarding Organisation to facilitate communication of results via secure web-based platform.</p> |
| 10. Centres are unable to distribute results as normal | Centres are unable to access or manage the distribution of results to learners | <p>Distribution of results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • centre to make arrangements to receive results at/and post results from an alternative site, in agreement with the Awarding Organisation • centres to share facilities with other centres if this is possible, in agreement with the Awarding Organisation. |

Summary of responsibilities in the event of disruption to assessments

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| The Awarding Organisation is responsible for: | Centres are responsible for: |
| | Preparing plans for any disruption to exams as part of centres' general emergency planning |
| Ensuring centres receive assessment materials for scheduled assessments | Preparing learners for assessment |
| | Ensuring assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by the Awarding Organisation |
| | Ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and learners' work are stored under secure conditions |
| | Deciding whether the centre can open for assessments as scheduled and informing the Awarding Organisation if the centre is unable to open |
| Advising centres on possible alternative assessment arrangements and declining/approving proposals for alternative assessment arrangements | Exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for assessments and agreeing such arrangements with the Awarding Organisation |
| Evaluating and declining/approving requests for special consideration | Judging whether learners meet the requirements for special consideration as a result of any disruption and submitting these requests to the Awarding Organisation |
| | Assessing and liaising with the Awarding Organisation in the event of disruption to the transportation of assessment materials |
| Marking, moderating and grading learners' work | |
| Issuing results to centres | The distribution of assessment results to learners |