SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGES GROUP

EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY (Exams and Controlled Assessments)

2026/27



SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOLLOWING REVIEW

PAGE NUMBER OR HEADING NAME	DETAILS OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE	CHANGES MADE BY
Various	References updated	Yasmin Bowker-King
When is an emergency evacuation required?	Additional detail regarding Invacuation and Lockdowns	Sara Whitehead/Yasmin Bowker-King
Emergency evacuation procedure	Additional detail regarding Invacuation and Lockdowns	Sara Whitehead/Yasmin Bowker-King

Equality Impact Assessment

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to consider the equality implications of any new or amended policy, procedure, practice, project, function on different groups of staff, students and visitors to the college. This EIA tool provides a simple framework that helps evaluate whether the change may inadvertently disadvantage protected characteristics and identify ways to proactively advance and promote equality.

You will need to consider each of the equations and provide information as to consideration and any changes made in relation to Equality, diversity and inclusion.

Date EIA completed.	10.09.2026
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	Yasmin Bowker-King
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	Senior Exams Manager
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change	Students and Staff
What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.	This is a yearly review and update required by JCQ and awarding organisations

You will need to consider whether its possible that the proposed new policy / change in policy /procedure/practice etc could discriminate or unfairly discriminate or disadvantage people. You should consider:

Who gets to participate	Who does not, or who now does not due to the changes proposed / made.
Who is at an advantage	Who is at a disadvantage, and again has this changed?
Who will benefit	Who will not benefit (or who did and now doesn't due to the changes proposed in policy
Who can access the policy	Who cannot, or now cannot.

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with 1 the lowest and 5 the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Age	1	None Identified		
Disability	2	Some students may need support in understanding the emergency evacuation procedure include neurodiverse candidates who may react differently to alarms or disruption. The College holds practice fire drills at each campus multiple times throughout the academic year.	Students are identified at the beginning of the academic year of those who require different procedures or assistance during an emergency evacuation.	As and when required
Gender (Sex)	1	None Identified		
Gender Reassignment	1	None Identified		
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	None Identified		
Pregnancy / Maternity	1	None Identified		
Race	1	None Identified		
Religion or Religious Belief	1	None Identified		
Sexual Orientation	1	None Identified		
Any other element that needs to be considered.	1	None Identified		

Note:

1. The terms stated under protected characteristics are the terminology used in the Equality Act 2010.
2. As part of the policy approval process Executive Board will consider the EIA assessment and any potential barriers which we may not be able to overcome and whether the action proposed will mitigate sufficiently within legislation or whether we decide to not implement the new policy if the risk are significant. If the policy is approved the EIA is also approved.

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Purpose of the policy

This policy details how South Essex Colleges Group deals with an emergency evacuation of the exam room(s) or controlled assessment room(s) by defining staff roles and responsibilities and confirming the emergency evacuation procedure.

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Denise Brown
Senior Exams Manager	Yasmin Bowker-King
Senior leader(s)	Stuart Hall
SENCo/Additional Support Manager	Jenny Hixon

When is an emergency evacuation required?

An emergency evacuation is required where it is unsafe for candidates to remain in the exam room or controlled assessment room. This might include a fire in the exam room or controlled assessment room, the fire alarm sounding to warn of fire, bomb alert or other serious threat.

In some circumstances, full evacuation may not be the safest response. Where there is an external hazard or a significant threat to safety, candidates and staff may instead be instructed to invacuate or enter lockdown in line with college emergency and business continuity procedures.

Invacuation is the movement of candidates to a safe location within a building due to an external hazard where evacuation would increase risk.

Lockdown is the immediate securing of an examination room or building in response to a significant threat to safety, requiring occupants to remain silent, out of sight where possible, and under supervision until an all-clear is given.

In exceptional situations, where candidates might be severely disadvantaged or distressed by remaining in the exam room or controlled assessment room, the emergency evacuation procedure may also need to be followed. This might include situations where there is severe disruption in the exam room or controlled assessment room, serious illness of a candidate or invigilator or similarly serious incidents.

As each incident may be different, advice will be sought from the relevant awarding organisation as soon as it is safe to do so. (ICE 25.6)

Where candidates are unable to return to the building to complete the examination, the relevant awarding organisation will be contacted immediately for advice.

Emergency evacuation of an exam room or controlled assessment room

Roles and responsibilities

Head of centre

- Ensures the emergency evacuation policy for exams and controlled assessments is fit for purpose and complies with relevant health and safety regulation
- Ensures any instructions from relevant local or national agencies are referenced and followed where applicable
- Ensures any breach of question paper security or malpractice is reported to the awarding organisation **immediately** (ICE 25.5)

Senior leader

- Where responsible for the centre-wide emergency evacuation procedure, ensures all staff and appointed fire marshals are aware of the policy and procedures to be followed when an emergency evacuation of an exam room or controlled assessment room is required
- After any real evacuation, a debrief will occur to review what went well and what could be improved

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo/Additional Support Manager)

- Ensures Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are in place for the emergency evacuation of a candidate with specific support needs or candidate with a disability from an exam room or controlled assessment room where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for the candidate
- Ensures the candidate is informed prior to taking their exams of what will happen in the event of an emergency evacuation

Senior Exams Manager/Exam Team

- Ensures invigilators and department staff supporting controlled assessments are trained in emergency evacuation procedures and how an incident and actions taken must be recorded
- Ensures candidates are briefed through course inductions from tutors prior to exams taking place, on what will happen in the event of an emergency in the exam room or controlled assessment room
- Provides invigilators with a copy of the emergency evacuation procedure for every exam room or controlled assessment
- Provides a standard invigilator announcement for each exam room or controlled assessment room which includes appropriate instructions for candidates about emergency procedures and what will happen if the fire alarm sounds
- Provides an exam room/controlled assessment room incident log in each room
- Liaises with the SENCo/Additional Support Manager and other relevant staff prior to each exam where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a candidate with specific support needs or candidate with a disability
- Briefs invigilators prior to each exam where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a candidate with specific support needs or Candidate with a disability
- Ensures appropriate follow-up is undertaken after an emergency evacuation, reporting the incident to the awarding organisation and the actions taken
- Ensures a full report of the incident is produced and retained on file if required by an awarding organisation (ICE 25.4)
- Ensures an online application for special consideration is submitted to the relevant awarding organisation where candidates have been disadvantaged (ICE 25.7)

Invigilators

- By attending training and/or update sessions, ensure they understand what to do in the event of an emergency in the exam room or controlled assessment room
- Follow the actions required in the emergency evacuation procedure issued to them for every exam room or controlled assessment room
- Confirm with the Senior Exams Manager/Exams team, where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate they are invigilating
- Record details on the exam room/controlled assessment room incident log to support follow-up reporting to the awarding organisation by the Senior Exams Manager/Exams team (see below)

Other relevant centre staff

- Support the senior leader, SENCo/Additional Support Manager, Senior Exams Manager/Exams team and invigilators in ensuring the safe emergency evacuation of exam rooms or controlled assessment rooms

Recording details

As soon as practically possible and safe to do so, details should be recorded. Details must include:

- the actual time of the start of the interruption
- the actions taken
- the actual time the exam(s) resumed
- the actual finishing time(s) of the resumed exam(s)
- confirmed practice on staff and students can provide feedback or report issues after drills/incidents

Further details could include:

- report on candidate behaviour throughout the interruption/evacuation
- a judgement on the impact on candidates after the interruption/evacuation

Where Security, Estates, the Emergency Services, or other authorised staff instruct an invacuation or lockdown rather than an evacuation, invigilators must follow the relevant college procedure and maintain exam security and candidate supervision as far as possible.

Emergency evacuation procedure

Invigilators are trained in this procedure and understand the actions they must take In the event of a fire alarm, emergency evacuation, or instruction from Security, Estates, or the Emergency Services that leads to an evacuation of the exam room or controlled assessment room.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE
Actions to be taken (as detailed in current JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations (25. **Emergencies**)
Stop the candidates from writing
Collect the attendance register (to ensure all candidates are present)
Evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority
Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room Candidates must be advised to close their answer booklet
Ensure the candidates leave the room in silence
Ensure candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room so that there is no discussion about the examination
Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted
Allow the candidates the remainder of the working time set for the examination once it resumes
Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken (to be retained on file if required by an awarding organisation)
For on-screen exams/computer controlled assessments: · Candidates must be closely supervised if an emergency evacuation of the assessment room occurs · Invigilators should refer to any software specific instructions to safeguard the security of the assessment content and candidates' responses (For example, pausing the assessment for all candidates and locking the evacuated assessment room without closing the software) · Invigilators should understand the procedures for re-starting an on-screen exam or controlled assessment after an emergency evacuation of the assessment room, controlling the re-starting of the assessment, re-setting the timing and ensuring, where appropriate, candidates can reaccess their previous responses

Additional centre-specific actions to be taken
Report to the Priority meeting point as shown on the campus fire evacuation plan
Once the candidates and invigilator are safe, inform the Exams team who will inform the Senior Exams Manager
Remind candidates that no discussion is to take place and in the event of this, learners will be reported to the awarding organisation
Invacuation: Move candidates to a safe and communicated location within the building due to an external hazard where evacuation would increase risk.
Lockdown: The immediate securing of an examination room or building in response to a significant threat to safety. Remind learners to remain silent, out of sight where possible, and that will be under supervision until an all-clear is given.

References

JCQ-Instructions-for-conducting-examinations-2026_FINAL.pdf

End of Policy



Senior Leadership Responsibility	Ansar Mahmood
Policy Author	Yasmin Bowker-King
Roles Responsible for Reviewing	Senior Exams Manager
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Type of Policy	Public / Internal