SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGES GROUP

Exam and Controlled Assessment Contingency Policy

26-27



SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOLLOWING REVIEW 26-27

PAGE NUMBER OR HEADING NAME	DETAILS OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE	CHANGES MADE BY
Further guidance	Updated links for 26/27	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.	10-09-26
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 policy. This will be provided by the student support teams in the College.	Students with an identified disability can seek support from a Carer/Parent or Guardian and the College for any exam and controlled assessment contingency processes. Support will also be provided by the College teams.	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 approve

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EXAM AND CONTROLLED ASSESSMENTS CONTINGENCY PLAN

Purpose of the Plan

This plan identifies potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam and controlled assessment process at South Essex Colleges Group. By outlining actions/procedures to be followed in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

The plan will cover the following scenarios:

- The head of centre, relevant senior leader(s) with oversight of examination and assessment administration, SENCo/Additional Support Manager, Senior Exams Manager or any other key staff essential to the examination process being absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle
- The potential impact of other events such as flooding which could lead to all or parts of the centre becoming unavailable
- Potential issues with the centre's IT systems

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by the Ofqual (and Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) **Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland** which provides guidance in the document *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted* and the JCQ guidance **Preparing for disruption to examinations**.

Operating across more than one centre

As the head of centre and/or Senior Exams Manager operates across more than one centre, the head of centre will ensure there is suitable senior leadership team support in place, so they can meet their obligations across all centres for which they are responsible in relation to recruitment, selection, training and support of staff. The arrangements covered in this contingency plan relate to the following centres:

- Southend City College
- The Basildon Colleges; Stephenson Road, Basildon Town Centre, Luckyn Lane
- The Thurrock College

National Centre Number Register and other information requirements

In accordance with the regulations (GR 5.3), the head of centre will ensure that South Essex College Group responds to the National Centre Number Register annual update by the end of October every year which includes providing senior designated contact details including telephone and email details.

Causes of potential disruption to the exam process

1. Exams Manager 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 organisation specifications being delivered
    - annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
    - sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained
- *Entries*
    - awarding organisations not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
    - candidates not being entered with awarding organisations for external exams/assessment
    - awarding organisation 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 organisation 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 organisations/external moderators
- *Exam time*
    - exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations
    - required reports/requests not submitted to awarding organisations during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
    - candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding organisations
- *Results and post-results*
    - access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
    - the facilitation of the post-results services

Centre actions:

- SLT to appoint temporary Co-ordinator from the Exams team to cover an extended absence, ensuring the team is managed and all key tasks are met.
- Procedure manuals are available which cover all exam processes for each awarding organisation used by the College.
- CPD cross training within the Exams team to ensure all areas of the exams processes and deadlines can be met.
- Annual Exam team refresh sessions with official Exams Office material.

2. Escalation procedure for the absence of Head of Centre, or a member of the senior leadership team with oversight of examination administration

- South Essex College has in place a member of the senior leadership team who will provide support and guidance to the Senior Exams Manager and ensure that the integrity and security of examinations and assessments is maintained throughout an examination series.
- The designated member of SLT is the Group Vice CEO - Chief Information Officer.
- In the event of the absence of the Group Vice CEO - Chief Information Officer this role will be escalated to the Group Chief Executive.
- In the event of the absence of the Head of Centre the Head of Centre's role in relation to maintaining the integrity and security of examinations and assessments will fall to the Group Chief Executive.

3. SENCo/Additional Support Manager 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 organisation
    - 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:

- ALS to use alternative suitably qualified assessor to carry out assessments
- All members of the Exams team are conversant with the procedures for requesting approval with individual awarding organisations and arranging candidate support

4. Teaching staff extended absence at a critical stage of the exam cycle

Criteria for implementation of the plan

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information not provided to the Senior Exams Manager/Exams team on time; resulting in pre-release information not being received

- Final entry information not provided to the Senior Exams Manager/Exams team on time, resulting in:
    - candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late
    - late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding organisations
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines
- Non-examination assessment (including controlled assessments and coursework) tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled.
- Candidates not being informed of centre assessed marks before marks are submitted to the awarding organisation and therefore not being able to consider appealing internal assessment decisions and requesting a review of the centre's marking

Centre actions:

- Contact Head of School for required information

5. 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 or controlled assessments
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

Centre actions:

- Contact another invigilator in the first instance to cover absence on the day
- College staff would be used to cover any shortfall or absence of invigilators

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Senior Exams Manager/Exams team unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days
- Main exam venues unavailable due to an expected incident at exam time

Centre actions:

- Priority would be given to exams and classes moved to make suitable rooms available
- Consideration would be given to using College satellite centres with agreement from awarding organisations:
  Southend College
  Basildon Colleges; Stephenson Road Campus, Luckyn Lane Campus and Basildon Town Centre Campus
  Thurrock College

7. Exam Disruption

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Strike action by college staff
- Serious exam disruption including national travel strikes

Centre actions:

- Reschedule non dated entry exams to an alternative date
- Amend start times of dated entry exams following JCQ regulations of allowance for published start time flexibility. For example, starting a morning exam with a published start time of 9am half an hour earlier of 8.30am or later of 9.30am.
- Inform students of planned travel strike notices for other travel arrangements to be made in advance.
- Apply for special consideration for learners affected by disruption with awarding organisations

8. Cyber-attack

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery (see cyber security policy also)

Centre actions:

- Contact Awarding organisations to inform them of the attack
- Examinations and controlled assessments to be cancelled/postponed until attack is resolved
- Liaise with students informing them of the incident
- Provide Awarding organisations with updates and depending on nature of examination enquire about special consideration for learners.
- If attack is during an examination causing IT systems to shut down, check for any possible offline back-ups of candidates work to submit to Awarding organisations
- Ensuring authorised members of staff securely access awarding organisations' online systems in
  line with awarding organisation regulations regarding cyber security and the JCQ document *Guidance for centres on cyber security*
- Authorised staff will have access, where necessary, to a device which complies with awarding organisations' multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements.
- Centre requirement for all staff to have access to the colleges multi-factor authentication application to access college systems to minimise potential cyber-attack risk

9. 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
- Technical failure or power outage immediately prior to or during an on-screen examination or controlled assessment
- IT system corruption affecting candidates' work

Centre actions:

- Contact MIS provider for assistance
- Contact awarding organisation to discuss alternative ways to submit data or request extension to deadline
- As an alternative to using College MIS access awarding organisation secure site to produce provisional statement of results and results data
- Contact IT to retrieve possible back-ups including off-site servers for candidates work

10. 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:

- Provide alternative on-line learning methods during extended closure
- Provide additional teaching time to cover lost time

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

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centre unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

  In the event that the head of centre decides the centre cannot be opened for scheduled examinations, the relevant awarding organisation must be informed as soon as possible. Awarding organisations will be able to offer advice regarding the alternative arrangements for conducting examinations that may be available and the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations

  Centre actions:

- Contact Awarding organisations in the first instance for advice
- If possible open an area of the site for exam candidates only
- On demand on-screen exams would be re-scheduled for an alternative date or venue
- Consideration would be given to using College satellite centres or alternative sites with agreement from awarding organisation e.g.-

Southend College to Stephenson Road Campus
Basildon Town Centre Campus to Luckyn Lane campus
Luckyn Lane to Thurrock college

- Apply for Special Consideration for candidates where they meet the minimum requirement and were unable to sit the exams

12. 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 because of a crisis

Centre actions:

- Liaise with candidates and Awarding organisations to whether the exams can be sat at an alternative venue
- Delayed start time where possible taking into consideration the very late arrival rules
- Where possible on-demand on-screen exams would be re-scheduled for an alternative date or venue
- Apply for Special Consideration for candidates where they meet the minimum requirement and were unable to sit the exams
- Ensure learners are informed in advance of national awarding organisation contingency days for GCSES, AS and A Levels in the event an exam can't take as planned nationally

13. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the disruption of examination papers to centres in advance of the examinations

Centre actions:

- Download papers and from Awarding organisations secure systems, copy sufficient number and store under secure conditions
- If unable to access secure systems request the Awarding organisations to fax a copy is faxed

14. Delay in collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts

Centre actions:

- Contact Awarding organisations in the first instance for advice and instructions
- Where possible parcels should be taken to an Express Post Office or an alternative depot who accept examinations which are part of the national 'yellow label' service or where awarding organisations
  arrange collection
- Ensure scripts are kept in secure storage and arrange an alternative collection date

15. 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:

- Provide where possible other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as agreed with the Awarding organisations to generate marks
- Contact the Awarding organisations for advice

16. 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:

- Use alternative venue to access results and process post results services
- Arrange an alternative collection venue
- Communicate alternative arrangements to candidates

Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning

DFE

Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges Cyber security: core standard

Ofqual

emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings from the DfE in England
handling strike action in schools from the DfE in England
protective security and preparedness for education settings from the DfE
police guidance from National Counter Terrorism Security Office and partners on preparing for threats
cyber security guidance for schools and colleges from the National Cyber Security Centre

Emergency planning and response: Exam and assessment disruption
www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

Dispatch of exam scripts guide: Contingency planning
www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service

JCQ

General Regulations for Approved Centres Gen_regs_approved_centres_26-27_FINAL.pdf

Guidance on alternative site arrangements JCQ-Alternative-site-arrangement-infographic-2026.pdf

Preparing for disruption to examinations Gen_regs_approved_centres_26-27_FINAL.pdf

Instructions for conducting examinations (reference to section 15, **Contingency planning**) JCQ-Instructions-for-conducting-examinations-2026_FINAL.pdf

Guidance on access arrangements and special consideration JCQ-AARA-2025-March-26.pdf

National Cyber Security Centre

The NCSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services can help protect schools from cyber-attacks. Two NCSC cyber security services, which are already helping thousands of organisations to protect their websites and email servers from cyber-attacks, are now available to all UK schools. Both tools are available free of charge, are quick to set up, and thereafter run automatically. More information is available from the NCSC website.

NCSC Cyber Security guidance:

Cyber Security for Schools www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/education-skills/cyber-security-schools

Cyber security training for school staff www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools

End of policy



Senior Leadership Responsibility	Ansar Mahmood
Policy Author	Ansar Mahmood/Yasmin Bowker-King
Roles Responsible for Reviewing	Group Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Information Officer / Senior Exams Manager
Date to be reviewed	September 2027
Type of Policy	Public / Internal