



Examination Contingency Plan

Policy Review: March 2026

Signed by:

Headteacher

Date: 01/03/25

Proprietor

Date: 01/03/25

1. AIMS OF THE EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN

The Examination Contingency Plan is designed to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of significant disruption to the examination system. This also applies to all other qualifications at Darwin School. The implementation of this plan is intended to safeguard the interests of candidates, whilst maintaining the integrity of the examination system and safeguarding qualification standards.

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 relevant official agencies dealing with the specific circumstances being faced, for example: the Police, Environment Agency or Health Protection Agency.

The contingencies covered may 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 published timetables; delivering results to published timetables; complying with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.

If the usual contingencies are no longer sufficient to maintain these outcomes, the Senior Leadership Team at Darwin School will agree the additional actions required.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

In the event of local disruption communication to teachers and students will take place through the Headteacher.

In the event of major disruption, details of specific contingencies agreed across organisations involved in the examinations process will be confirmed on the Ofqual website and proactively communicated to relevant stakeholders by the Headteacher.

This includes communication between the organisations involved in the response, in addition to communications to stakeholders such as: centres, candidates, parents/carers and the general public.

The organisations involved in this Contingency Plan are committed to: sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan; communicating with stakeholders so they are aware of disruption to the exams, the contingency measures being implemented and any actions required of them as a result; ensuring any messages to the public are clear and accurate.

3. DISRUPTION OF TEACHING TIME – SCHOOL CLOSED FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD

If Darwin School is 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, it is the responsibility of the school to prepare students, as usual, for examinations. The school should plan to facilitate teaching and learning by an alternative method or alternative location.

Guidance on emergency planning, with advice on severe weather, is available on the Department for Education website:

[Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings - GOV.UK](#)

4. DISRUPTION TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF EXAMINATION PAPERS

If the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of Examinations is disrupted, the awarding organisations must source alternative couriers for delivery of hard copies. The awarding organisations will provide the school with electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network. The examinations officer must ensure that all copies are received, made and stored under secure conditions.

5. CANDIDATES UNABLE TO TAKE EXAMINATIONS BECAUSE OF CRISIS – CENTRES REMAIN OPEN

If candidates are unable to attend, the examination should take place as normal. This contingency applies if Darwin School becomes closed due to extreme issues on the school site e.g. fire:-

The school will liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue, in agreement with the relevant awarding organisations. JCQ guidance on alternative site arrangements can be accessed through the JCQ website:

https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/JCQ-Instructions-for-conducting-examinations_2024_Print-1.pdf

The school can offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.

The school can apply to awarding organisations, for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements. Candidates are ONLY eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. JCQ guidance on special consideration can be accessed through the JCQ website:

6. CENTRES ARE UNABLE TO OPEN AS NORMAL DURING THE EXAMINATION PERIOD

If Darwin School is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations, it must inform each awarding organisation with which examinations are due to be taken, as soon as possible. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for the school to open lies with the Head of Centre. The Headteacher is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether they are able to open: the school should open for examinations and examination candidates only if it is possible. The school should use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible).

The school may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series. The school can apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements (see item 5).

7. DISRUPTION TO THE TRANSPORTATION OF COMPLETED EXAMINATION SCRIPTS

If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts, the school will seek advice from awarding organisations and the normal/usual collection agency regarding collection. The school must not make arrangements for transportation without approval from awarding organisations. The school must ensure secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

8. ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE TO BE MARKED

If, due to large scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked, the awarding organisations should generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the awarding organisations, in consultation with the regulators. The candidates should retake affected assessment at the subsequent assessment window.

9. DISRUPTION TO THE SCANNING PROCESS – WHERE COMPLETED EXAMINATION SCRIPTS ARE BEING SCANNED IN PREPARATION FOR ONSCREEN MARKING

If the examination board's scanning process is disrupted, resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates, the awarding organisations should implement their existing contingency plans for disruption to the onscreen marking process. The awarding organisations should revert to the traditional form of marking. The awarding organisations should recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers.

10. MARKERS UNABLE TO MARK EXAMINATION SCRIPTS ACCORDING TO MARKING SCHEDULES

If the examination board markers are unable to mark examination scripts resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates, the awarding organisations should re-allocate scripts to available markers; the awarding organisations should also recruit, train or re-standardise qualified new markers: prioritisation of marking should be based on results' dates.

11. DIFFICULTY IN MEETING PLANNED SCHEDULE OR UNABLE TO ISSUE RESULTS

If the awarding organisation(s) face delay in meeting the planned schedule for issuing results the awarding body should establish priorities for processing results; implement existing contingency plans for disruption to the schedule for issuing results.

If awarding organisation(s) face difficulty in issuing results as planned due to a systems failure: in consultation with regulators, the level of disruption will be assessed and alternative options for issuing results should be found, dependent upon the nature of the particular systems failure. The awarding organisations and regulators should liaise with the relevant organisations regarding the process of candidate progression to further and higher education.

12. AWARDING ORGANISATIONS UNABLE TO ISSUE ACCURATE RESULTS

If a system error/failure or an attack on systems means significant numbers of results cannot be validated as accurate, or are issued and found to be inaccurate, the candidates, school and stakeholders will be informed of any incorrect results. The awarding organisations will re-validate the relevant results. The awarding organisations will then re-issue results, via alternative format if necessary.

13. CENTRES ARE UNABLE TO DISTRIBUTE RESULTS AS NORMAL

If the school is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates, or to facilitate a postal results service, the school should contact the awarding organisations about alternative options: the school will make arrangements to access its results at an alternative site. The school will make arrangements to coordinate access to post result services from an alternative site. The school will share facilities with other centres where possible.

14. SUMMARY OF SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EVENT OF DISRUPTION TO EXAMINATIONS

School responsibilities include: the preparation of plans for any disruption to exams as part of centres' general emergency planning; preparing candidates for examinations; ensuring examinations and assessments are taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding organisations; ensuring, where relevant, that assessment materials and candidate work are stored under secure conditions; deciding whether the centre can open for examinations as scheduled and informing relevant awarding organisations if the centre is unable to open; exploring the opportunities for alternative arrangements if the centre cannot open for examinations and agreeing such arrangements with the awarding organisations; assessing and liaising with awarding organisations in the event of disruption to the transportation of papers.