



# Exam Contingency Plan and Procedure

## **NESCOT COLLEGE – EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN – May 2023**

### ***Aim of the Exam Contingency Plan***

The Examination Contingency Plan is designed to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the management and administration of the examination system at Nescot College affecting candidates across several awarding organisations.

Alongside internal processes, this plan is informed by information contained in the Joint contingency plan for the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In addition, all awarding organisations are required to have their own well-established contingency plans in place to respond to such disruptions. The Nescot College Examinations Contingency Plan complements these processes and procedures, not replaces them.

The plan will be implemented in the event of major disruptions to the system, such as widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather or power failure. 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 Health Protection Agency.

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

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

- **delivering assessments and examinations to published timetables**
- **delivering results to published timetables**
- **complying with regulatory requirements in relation to examinations, assessment, marking and standards**

**If the situation cannot be resolved, the Senior Management Team will meet to agree further actions.**

### ***Causes of potential disruption to the exam process***

- 1. Head of Examinations and Assessments/Exams Administrators extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle) meaning an extended understaffing of the exams team**

The department is structured with a Head of Examinations and Assessments (Examinations Manager), 1 x Exams Officer, 2 FTE Examination Administrators and 2 part time Examination Administrators that job share. In a period of extended absence the Exams Officer would take responsibility for carrying out the duties of the Head of Examination and Assessments and would work in consultation with the Assistant Principal, Planning and Information Services. Cross training within the Exams team ensures all areas of the exams processes and deadlines can be met. If there is exceptional staff shortage across the whole exam team, defer any on demand exams in order to prioritise nationally timetabled exams.

- 2. ALS Assessor extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle)**

Head of Learning Support will allocate tasks to relevant members of the learning support team in the absence of the dedicated ALS assessor.

### **3. Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle**

In the event of a period of extended absence of a member of the teaching staff, the Head of Department for the curriculum area would arrange teaching cover from within the staff team, the wider staffing establishment of the College. New staff providing cover would be briefed as part of their induction process on arrangements for assessment and examinations. Their practice in terms of assessments would be monitored by an experienced member of the teaching team. New staff are able to arrange 1:1 meetings with the Exams team to discuss registration, examination processes.

### **4. Invigilators – lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence**

New invigilators undergo training. Annual training sessions are held in March/April for all invigilators in order to refresh their knowledge and to communicate JCQ regulation changes and update local information. The College retains a pool of approximately 35 invigilators. When invigilators resign/retire from the pool, recruitment procedures are put in place. Minor absence issues (such as an invigilator calling in sick) are covered by attempts to contact another invigilator from the pool at short notice or is covered by a member of the Exams team.

### **5. Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice**

The majority of paper-based exams are accommodated in free classrooms across Nescot campus and/or the Sports Hall. On demand On-screen tests are accommodated in dedicated online testing rooms. If required, priority would be given to exams and classes are moved to make suitable rooms available. Teaching days are suspended on particularly busy days to enable all classroom usage. Meeting rooms, classrooms and offices are used for examination support students.

### **6. Failure of IT Systems**

The College endeavours to minimise any IT disruption via resilient design and preventative maintenance which is inclusive of cyber-attacks. Where such failure impacted on scheduled exams steps would be taken to reschedule these exams where possible at the earliest opportunity. Where failure results MIS system being unavailable to submit entries or results, this would be recorded and the awarding organisations would be contacted to discuss alternative ways to submit/download data or request extension to deadlines.

### **7. Disruption of teaching time – centre closed for an extended period**

If the College is closed or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during the normal teaching or study supported time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning the college will provide alternative on-line teaching methods and provide additional teaching time to cover lost time. Details of closure, alternative teaching availability would be communicated to learners via the College's website, text messaging facilities. Industrial action.

### **8. Centre unable to open as normal during exams period**

In the event that the College is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations the relevant awarding organisations will be informed as soon as possible. Advice will be taken from the awarding organisations 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. The possibility of opening an area on site for examination purposes only will be considered. Consideration will be given to using alternative sites with the agreement of the awarding organisations. Special consideration will be applied for where candidates have met the minimum requirement and were unable to sit the exams. The College will offer the candidates an opportunity to sit any examination missed at the next available series. On-demand on-screen exams will be re-scheduled for an alternative date or venue. Arrangement details would be communicated to staff and candidates via College website, text messaging facilities. Exams staff and invigilators would also be contacted by phone.

#### **9. Candidate unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open**

If a candidate is unable to attend the College to take examinations as normal because of a crisis i.e. hospitalised, injured at home and unable to travel, the exams team will liaise with the candidate and awarding organisation as to whether the exams can be sat at an alternative venue. The College will offer the candidates an opportunity to sit any examination missed at the next available series. Special consideration will be applied for where the candidate meets the minimum requirement and were unable to sit the exams. Where possible on-demand on-screen exams would be re-scheduled for an alternative date or venue.

#### **10. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers**

If the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of Examinations is disrupted the awarding organisations will source alternative couriers for delivery of the examination papers. If required the exams team will contact the awarding organisation to obtain electronic versions of the examination paper either via e-mail or the board secure site. If the board is unable to provide electronic version then a faxed copy should be provided. On receipt the papers will be copied and stored in secure storage.

#### **11. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination Scripts**

If there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts the Exams team will seek advice from awarding organisations and normal collection agency regarding collection including arranging an alternative collection date/time. The College will not make arrangements for transportation without approval from the awarding organisation. Completed scripts will be stored securely until collection.

#### **12. 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 Exams team will notify the awarding organisation immediately. Student marks would be submitted based on appropriate evidence and candidates would be given the opportunity to retake in the subsequent series. Special consideration application will be submitted.

#### **13. Centre unable to distribute results as normal**

The centre distributes the results 'as normal' via collection by learner. Where learners do not collect results in person, these will be distributed via royal mail. Student tutors are also able to email results to students on request.

### ***Summary of College responsibilities in the event of disruption to examinations***

- Preparing 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 set 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.
- Judging whether candidates meet the requirements for special consideration as a result of any disruption and submitting these requests to the relevant awarding organisations.
- The distribution of examination results to candidates.
- Recording of all incidents that relate to the disruption to examinations.

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