



Examination contingency plan

2026-27

Approved by:	Paula Tucker, Head of Centre	Date: 1 September 2026
Review by:	1 September 2027	

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1. Aims

This plan enables ReFocus to respond promptly and consistently to events that could disrupt the administration or delivery of examinations and assessments. It aims to:

- identify foreseeable risks across the examination cycle;
- protect candidates, examination security and the integrity of assessment;
- maintain access arrangements and safeguarding arrangements; and
- reduce disruption through clear actions, cover arrangements and communication.

2. Regulatory requirements and guidance

This plan applies to qualifications for which ReFocus is an approved centre and will be implemented in accordance with the current requirements for the relevant academic year, including:

- JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres;
- JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations and associated forms;
- JCQ guidance on preparing for disruption, special consideration, access arrangements, non-examination assessment and cyber security;
- Ofqual examination-system contingency guidance; and
- the current requirements of AIM Qualifications and any other relevant awarding organisation.

The Head of Centre and Exams Officer will check the final 2026-27 JCQ and awarding-organisation requirements before the first assessment series and update local arrangements where required. Where another centre makes entries for a ReFocus pupil, responsibilities will be recorded in writing before the assessment series.

3. Responsibilities and succession arrangements

3.1 Head of Centre

The Head of Centre is Paula Tucker. The Head of Centre is accountable to awarding organisations and will ensure that this plan covers all aspects of examination and assessment administration, is adequately resourced and is understood by relevant staff. The Head of Centre remains responsible for the annual head-of-centre declaration and other responsibilities that cannot be delegated under awarding-organisation rules.

3.2 Operational roles

- The Exams Officer coordinates entries, timetables, secure materials, examination delivery, scripts, results and awarding-organisation communication.
- The SENCo/access-arrangements coordinator ensures approved arrangements and reasonable adjustments can be delivered.
- The IT Lead maintains secure systems, backups, recovery arrangements and support for electronic assessment.
- Invigilators and other authorised staff follow JCQ instructions, emergency procedures and the directions of the Exams Officer.
- The proprietor retains overall accountability for the school. The governing board provides support and oversight; it does not replace the Head of Centre's accountability to awarding organisations.

3.3 Cover arrangements

The following arrangements apply where a designated post-holder is unexpectedly unavailable. Cover will be confirmed in advance of each examination series, and the person providing cover will receive the information, authority and training needed for the temporary function:

Absent role	Contingency cover
Head of Centre or relevant senior leader	Another member of the SLT team
Exams Officer	Another member of the SLT team
SEnCo or access-arrangements coordinator	Another member of the SLT team
Invigilator, reader, scribe or practical assistant	Another appropriately trained non-teaching member of staff
IT staff	Another member of the SLT team, supported by approved technical support where required
Secure-storage keyholder	Another authorised member of the SLT team

Cover does not permit an untrained member of staff to undertake a regulated or specialist function beyond their competence. If safe and compliant cover cannot be secured, the Head of Centre will contact the relevant awarding organisation immediately.

4. Monitoring, testing and review

The Head of Centre and Exams Officer will review this plan before each main examination series and following any incident, exercise or significant change. ReFocus will periodically test critical-staff absence, alternative-site activation, emergency evacuation and cyber/IT recovery. Actions and lessons will be recorded, completed and communicated to relevant staff.

5. Links with other policies and procedures

- Examinations Policy and annual examination procedures
- Assessment Policy and AIM Qualifications guidance
- Access Arrangements Policy
- Special Consideration Procedure
- Cyber Security and Data Protection Policies
- Business Continuity and Emergency Evacuation Plans
- Safeguarding and Health and Safety Policies

6. Contingency plan

Throughout an incident, staff must prioritise safety and safeguarding, preserve examination security, keep an accurate incident log and contact the relevant awarding organisation promptly. ReFocus will not change examination dates, starting times, venues or secure procedures without the required authorisation.

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
Critical staff absence	A critical post-holder is absent at any point in the examination cycle.	• Activate the cover arrangements in section 3.3 and notify the Head of Centre immediately. • Check competence, system access, keys, current instructions, deadlines and handover information. • Contact the awarding organisation if compliant delivery may be affected; record decisions and actions.	Head of Centre / designated SLT deputy
Insufficient invigilators or access-arrangement support	Trained invigilators, readers, scribes, practical assistants or other approved support are unavailable.	• Use another appropriately trained non-teaching member of staff and confirm that required conflicts-of-interest checks are complete. • Preserve approved access arrangements, rooming, supervision ratios and examination security. • If suitable cover cannot be provided, contact the awarding organisation before changing arrangements.	Exams Officer / SENCo / designated SLT deputy
Disruption to teaching or preparation	Extended closure or disruption prevents normal teaching, revision or supported study before an assessment.	• Assess affected candidates and progression-critical deadlines; use safe alternative teaching, remote learning or venues. • Inform candidates, parents/carers and commissioning schools of confirmed arrangements. • Seek awarding-organisation advice where preparation or assessment evidence is materially affected.	Head of Centre / SLT
Candidate unable to attend while centre remains open	A candidate cannot reach or attend the centre because of illness, transport disruption, safeguarding concerns or another crisis.	• Contact the candidate and parent/carer promptly and inform the commissioning school where appropriate. • Explore whether the candidate can sit safely in accordance with JCQ starting-time, very-late-arrival and alternative-site rules. • Apply for special consideration only where the published criteria are met; do not promise a future series or adjusted grade.	Exams Officer / DSL or SLT as appropriate

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
Centre unavailable or unsafe	All or part of the registered site is unavailable because of fire, flood, utility failure, structural concern, severe weather, security or public-health incident.	- The Head of Centre decides whether the site is safe, taking account of relevant professional or agency advice. - Contact awarding organisations immediately and activate the approved alternative-site arrangements where practicable. - Submit the required JCQ Alternative Site form via CAP and notify the Centre Inspection Service; communicate transport, access and safeguarding arrangements.	Head of Centre / Exams Officer / Site Lead
Emergency evacuation or room disruption	An alarm, illness, medical emergency, noise, security incident or loss of essential services interrupts an examination.	- Invigilators stop the examination, note the time, secure materials where possible and evacuate in accordance with the emergency procedure. - Maintain supervision and prevent communication; record the incident, resumption time and candidates affected. - Notify the awarding organisation and seek advice or special consideration where the incident materially affected candidates.	Senior invigilator / Exams Officer / Head of Centre
Question papers delayed, incorrect, missing or compromised	Hard-copy or electronic secure materials are unavailable, incorrect, damaged or suspected of being breached.	- Do not open or use unauthorised material; contact the awarding organisation immediately and follow its instructions. - Access electronic papers only when authorised, through the approved secure system, using authorised staff, required checks and an audit trail. - Print and collate securely, apply a second-pair-of-eyes check where required, and transfer materials immediately to secure storage.	Exams Officer / authorised SLT deputy
Cyber, IT or electronic-assessment failure	Systems needed for entries, secure downloads, on-screen tests, marks, evidence, results or post-results services are unavailable or compromised.	- Stop affected activity, isolate compromised devices or accounts and notify the Head of Centre, Exams Officer and IT Lead. - Contact the awarding organisation promptly, preserve evidence and use only approved alternative equipment, networks or sites. - Use tested backups and secure offline timetables/contact details; record recovery actions and any data breach response.	IT Lead / designated SLT deputy / Exams Officer
Access-arrangement technology or resource failure	A word processor, assistive technology, modified paper, separate room or approved support arrangement fails.	- Notify the Exams Officer and SENCo immediately and use a pre-checked compliant replacement where available. - Maintain examination security and the candidate's approved reasonable adjustment. - Seek awarding-organisation advice before making any material departure and record the action taken.	SEnCo / Exams Officer / trained support staff

SCENARIO	WHEN TO IMPLEMENT	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
Completed-script collection disrupted	Scheduled collection is delayed or cancelled.	- Keep completed scripts packaged and in the secure room until as close as possible to collection; never leave packages unattended. - Contact the normal collection agent and awarding organisation. - Use an alternative courier or transport method only when approved by the awarding organisation, keeping a full dispatch record.	Exams Officer / authorised secure-storage keyholder
Scripts or assessment evidence lost, damaged or unavailable	Completed scripts, NEA, coursework, portfolios, recordings, authentication records or electronic evidence are lost, corrupted or destroyed.	- Protect remaining evidence and report the incident to the awarding organisation immediately. - Provide the incident record, secure backups and other evidence requested; inform candidates and parents/carers using agreed wording. - The awarding organisation will determine the permitted outcome; ReFocus will not assume marks can be generated or a resit offered.	Head of Centre / Exams Officer / subject lead
Results or post-results services disrupted	Results cannot be received or issued securely, or post-results applications cannot be processed, because of site, staffing, system or cyber disruption.	- Contact awarding organisations and activate authorised alternative secure access arrangements. - Protect restricted-release information, verify candidate identity and communicate how and when results will be issued. - Maintain access to post-results advice and deadlines; record candidate consent and requests securely.	Head of Centre / Exams Officer / designated SLT deputy
National or widespread disruption	DfE, Ofqual, JCQ or awarding organisations announce widespread disruption or revised arrangements.	- Follow official instructions and monitor awarding-organisation communications. - Do not independently change dates, starting times, venues or public messages unless authorised. - Prioritise clear, consistent communication with candidates, parents/carers, staff and commissioning schools.	Head of Centre / Exams Officer
Loss of communications or essential utilities	Telephone, internet, power, heating, lighting or water failure affects safe or secure examination delivery.	- Assess whether examinations can proceed safely using tested local arrangements and offline information. - Use alternative approved communications and contact awarding organisations as soon as possible. - Move to an approved room or alternative site only where security, access arrangements and required authorisation are maintained.	Head of Centre / Site Lead / IT Lead