EXAMS POLICY - 2022/23

CONTINGENCY PLAN

### This policy is a Skills for Work policy applicable at St Peters House examination Centre

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| **Date** | **Policy Version and Amendments** |
| March 2023 | New Plan (v1.0) |
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| **Policy Review** | |
| Review period: | Annually |
| Next review due: | March 2023 |

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# Aims

### The aims of this plan are:

* To examine potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of exams, including the potential impact of a cyber-attack.
* To mitigate the impact of disruptions by providing actions or procedures to follow.

# Legislation and guidance

This plan complies with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) General Regulations for Approved Centres, which require all exam centres to have a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy.

This plan is also informed by the Ofqual Exam system contingency plan: England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This plan also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

# Responsibilities

## Head of Centre

The head of centre will ensure that a written examination contingency plan/examinations policy is in place which covers all aspects of examination administration.

## Staff and invigilators

Staff and invigilators involved in the centre’s exam process are responsible for reading, understanding and implementing the contingency plan.

# Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every year in the autumn term, or well in advance of each exam series.

# Contingency plan

Possible causes of disruption to the exam process and actions that should be taken are detailed in the table below:

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| **Scenario** | | **When to implement** | | **Actions / Mitigation** | | **Person(s) responsible** | |
| Exams officer absence (short term or extended absence) at key points in the exam cycle | | In the event that the Exams Officer is absence from work in the immediate short term at key points in the exam cycle, or is absence long term.  Key points in the cycle relate to:   * **Planning stage**   *Collation of qualification details Recruitment of invigilators*   * **Entries**   *Submitting entries to awarding bodies*   * **Pre-exams**   *Exam scheduling (rooms/invigilators etc.) Issuing candidate timetables*   * **Exam time**   *Exam operations (running the exams)*   * **Results and post-results** *Downloading/issuing candidate results Dealing with post-result queries/requests* | | Head of Centre to assume responsibility for all aspects of the examination process.  Head of centre to allocate or appoint additional support staff to the exams team as appropriate. | | Head of Centre to direct other staff members and contact data team for additional support. | |
| Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam cycle | | When teaching staff are absent for a prolonged period thereby affecting non-examination assessment tasks being set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled and/or internal assessment marks/work not being available for submission to awarding bodies. | | Head of centre/SLT to employ suitable supply/temporary staff to cover staff absence in the short term ensuring that required assessment tasks are completed. | | Head of Centre/SLT | |
| Disruption of teaching time  – centre closed for an extended period | | When the centre is closed and candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during normal teaching or supported study time, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning. | | Seek advice from awarding organisations.  Communicate with learners about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans to address this.  Facilitate alternative methods of learning, alternative venues or both; Head of centre and SLT to work with the senior tutors to facilitate alternative arrangements to minimise the impact of lost learning and teaching time.  Prioritise learners who will be facing examinations shortly. | | Head of Centre  & SLT | |
| Invigilators shortage; lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence | | When the centre failures to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams (to meet expected ratios) or there is an invigilator shortage on peak exam days/absence on the day of an exam. | | Head of Centre will review the invigilation staffing at the start of each academic year and after making exam entries to ensure sufficient staff are recruited and trained to meet expected ratios working closely with SLT. | | SLT / Head of Centre | |

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| Exam rooms shortage; lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice | When it is identified that there are insufficient exam rooms available to accommodate learners for scheduled public examinations. | IQA’s will organise rooming for examinations in advance of all examination windows to ensure sufficient time is available to identify appropriate rooms and plan appropriately.  In the event of a room not being available at very short notice (or insufficient rooming available), support staff and invigilators will be used to ensure the security of the examination is not compromised whilst alternative rooming is sourced (candidates will be suitably isolated as required).  Seek advice from awarding organisations ; request timetable adjustment if required and operate exams on split timings. | IQA/ SLT/ Head of Centre |
| Cyber attack | Where it is identified that a cyber attack may compromise any aspect of the delivery of examinations | IQA’s/ IT Co-Coordinator will work with IT and make contact with the relevant Awarding Body to seek further guidance.  SLT will monitor the situation and take any action required as directed by the Awarding Bodies. | IQA/ Head of Centre/ SLT/ IT Coordinator |
| Failure of IT systems | When the MIS (management information system) or IT network/internet connection fails at key points in the exam cycle.  Key points in the cycle relate to:   * **Entries**   *Submitting entries to awarding bodies*   * **Pre-exams**   *Exam scheduling (rooming/candidate seating etc.) Issuing candidate timetables*   * **Exam time**   *Online examinations*   * **Results and post-results**   *Downloading and producing results slips* | Exam room scheduling/timetables complied using alternative methods (alternative software/manual bookings and timetables).  Exams Officer will contact awarding bodies in respect of re-sitting online exams affected by system failure, or to seek an alternative solution.  Results accessed directly from the awarding bodies’ secure  extranet sites (accessed from an alternative site if necessary). | SLT / Head of Centre/ IQA’s |

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| Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lock down) | When the exam room requires evacuation (e.g. due to fire/bomb threat) or the centre enters a lockdown procedure. | Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as it is possible and safe to do so and seek advice.  Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy, where appropriate.  Invigilators to follow the emergency evacuation procedure for examinations in accordance with agreed protocols. | Head of Centre  /SLT & IQA |
| Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis – centre remains open | In the event that candidates are unable to attend examination centres to take examinations as normal  e.g. sickness bug (including Covid19 (Coronavirus)) | Communicate with relevant awarding organisations at the outset to make them aware of the issue and seek advice.  Communicate with Learners regarding any possible solutions/options to the issue.  Offer learners an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available series.  Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for learners where they have met the minimum requirements. | Head of Centre  /SLT & IQA |
| Centre is unable to open as normal during the examination period | In the event that the centre is unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations, e.g. a fire at the centre forces it to close. | Inform relevant awarding organisations as soon as possible and seek advice.  Refer to emergency plans and/or health and safety policy, where appropriate.  Open for the centre for examinations and examination candidates only, if possible.  Use alternative venues in agreement with relevant awarding organisations. SLT to work with FM for source suitable exam venues where possible.  Apply to awarding organisations for special consideration for learners where they have met the minimum requirements.  Offer learners an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available examinations series, if possible. | Head of Centre  /SLT & IQA |

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| Disruption in the distribution of examination papers | In the event that there is disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations. | Communicate with awarding organisations to organise alternative delivery of papers.  Arrange with exam boards for alternative means of receiving papers, e.g. electronically or alternative courier. | Head of Centre  /SLT & IQA |
| Disruption to the transportation of completed examination scripts | In the event that there is a delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts. | Seek advice from awarding organisations and their normal collection agency regarding collection.  Only make alternative arrangements after approval from awarding organisation and make sure papers are securely stored until collection. | Head of Centre  /SLT & IQA |
| Assessment evidence is not available to be marked | In the event of large-scale damage to, or destruction of, completed examination scripts or assessment evidence before it can be marked, e.g. a fire at the centre destroys completed examination scripts. | Communicate this immediately to the relevant awarding organisation(s),and learners.  Seek advice from awarding organisations on their procedures for dealing with such issues.  Where partial assessments can be recovered these will be made available where appropriate.  Procedures to recover/re-complete work (e.g. IT data reconstruction for electronic work) will be employed where relevant. | Head of Centre  /SLT & IQA |
| Centre is unable to distribute results as normal | In the event that the centre is unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates. | Contact awarding organisations about alternative options. | Head of Centre  /SLT & IQA |
| Head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team, with oversight of examination administration is absence (**Escalation process**) | In the event that the Head of centre, or a member of the senior leadership team, with oversight of examination administration is absence during the key points in the exam cycle. | Executive Officer alerted to staff absence and relief staff appointed and deployed from other sites as required.. | Head of Centre  /SLT & IQA |

# Staff with responsibility for exam procedures

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| **Position in Centre** | **Staff** |
| Head of Centre | Mark Fox |
| SLT Line Manager for IQA | Colin Atkins |
| IQA | Julie Raistrikt |
| IQA | Vacancy |
| Executive Officer | Saif Hussain |
| SFW Manager | Suzan McGladdery |