# EXAM CONTINGENCY PLAN

**Status:** Statutory

**Member of Staff Responsible**: Exams Officer (Anne Harris), Quality Nominee (Claire Pegg), Vice Principal/SLT (Rhydian Watkins) and Principal/HOC (Lee Kirkwood)

**Related Policies:**

- Examinations Policy
- Disability and Accessibility Statement
- Procedure for the emergency evacuation of the exam room
- Internal Appeals Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Non-examination Assessments Policy
- BTEC policy

**Implementation date:**

**Reviewed date:** September 2026

**Next review date:** September 2027

**Purpose of the plan**

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the management and administration of the exam process at the UTC. By outlining actions/procedures to be invoked in case of disruption, it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on our exam process.

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 publication *What schools and colleges and other centres should do if exams or other assessments are seriously disrupted* and the **JCQ Joint Contingency Plan** for the Examination System in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

This plan also confirms UTC Derby Pride Park's compliance with JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres** (section 5.3) that the centre has in place:

- a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration. This will allow members of the senior leadership team to act immediately in the event of an emergency or where the head of centre, examinations officer or SENCo is absent at a critical stage of the examination cycle. The examination contingency plan should reinforce procedures in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations, or on results day, owing to an unforeseen emergency
- The Head of Centre will ensure that communication to candidates, staff and parents is implemented, as appropriate

**Possible causes of disruption to the exam process:**

**1. Exams Officer 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 body specifications being delivered
  - annual exams plan not produced identifying essential key tasks, key dates and deadlines
  - sufficient invigilators not recruited and trained

- *Entries*
  - awarding bodies not being informed of early/estimated entries which prompts release of early information required by teaching staff
  - candidates not being entered with awarding bodies for external exams/assessment
  - awarding body 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 body 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 bodies/external moderators

- *Exam time*
  - exams/assessments not taken under the conditions prescribed by awarding bodies
  - required reports/requests not submitted to awarding bodies during exam/assessment periods e.g. very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration
  - candidates' scripts not dispatched as required to awarding bodies

- *Results and post-results*
  - access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates
  - the facilitation of the post-results services

**Centre actions**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate Exams Officer 's extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle):

- Examinations procedures – Both the SLT and QN have carried out exams previously
- In the event of extended absence – SLT with the assistance of QN to assume responsibility with support from wider SLT. HOC to ensure that access rights have been granted to exam boards.
- SLT member identified to monitor implementation.
  - Support gained from other Exams Officers across the Trust
  - Assistance to be requested from Awarding bodies and Exams Officer Network as required.

**SENDCo 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 body
  - 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**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate SENDCo extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle):

- Exams Officer and SLT to support Deputy SENDCo to ensure Access Arrangement deadlines are met.
- Staff identified and trained for support planning and allocation.
- Learning Managers to be used where necessary.
- Exams Officer to implement JCQ/Exam Board Applications.
- Assistance to be requested from Awarding Bodies and SENDCo Network group as required.
- SLT to monitor progress and deadlines.

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

**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Early/estimated entry information
- Not provided to the Exams Officer on time, resulting in pre-release information not being received
- Final entry information not provided to the Exams Officer on time resulting in:
- candidates not being entered for exams/assessments or being entered late
- late or other penalty fees being charged by awarding bodies
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet submission deadlines

**Centre actions**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate staff extended absence at key points in the exam process (cycle):

- Exams Officer to liaise with Curriculum Directors, teaching staff and SLT to ensure all necessary deadlines are met.
- Where necessary Exams Officer to contact awarding Bodies for advice.

**3. 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
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an exam

**Centre actions**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence:

- Business & Operations Director supported by Exams Officer to review invigilator staffing at the start of each academic year and ensure sufficient Invigilators are recruited and fully trained in plenty of time for the Examination season.
- Support staff trained and available to invigilate at short notice.
- Cover invigilators to be used in emergencies if no other options available.

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

**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

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

**Centre actions**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate lack of appropriate rooms or main venues unavailable at short notice:

- Security of Exams to be maintained at all times, students to be supervised until alternative arrangements have been made.
- Staff offices to be used.
- Partial school closure to “non – examining” year groups
- In the event of an unexpected incident, assistance to be requested from University of Derby where a mutual agreement has been put in place
- Permission to be sought from Awarding bodies.

**5. Cyber-attack**

**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- One or more systems appears to have been compromised
- The network team find the system has been impacted by an external user

**Centre actions**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate a cyber-attack

- The UTC has two-factor authentication to minimise cyber attacks
- Students work is backed up and is stored in the Mircrosoft Cloud

In the event of any Cyber incident, the Exam Boards will be contacted.

**6. 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

**Centre actions**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate failure of IT systems:

- Back-up site to site.
- Principal and Network Manager have remote access to systems via VPN.
- Hard copies of entry lists and mark sheets should be kept until submissions are complete.
- Entries and results can be submitted directly to Exam Boards using any internet access.
- Promptly reporting any incidents to the relevant awarding body/bodies which might compromise any aspect of assessment delivery such as a cyber-attack
- Where candidates produce work electronically, ensuring their work is backed up regularly and stored securely on the centre's IT system / ensuring protection of the candidates' work from corruption and considering the risks and implications of any cyber-attack
- Following and regularly reviewing National Cyber Security Centre advice for support in cyber security preparedness and mitigation work / Using the NCSC's free Web Check and Mail Check services to help protect from cyber-attacks

## 7. Emergency Evacuation of the Exam Room (Or Centre Lockdown)

**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

Whole centre evacuation (or lock down) during exam time due to serious incident resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams.

**Centre actions**

- Security of Exams to be maintained at all times, students to be supervised until alternative arrangements have been made
- Exams Officer/SLT to alert the exam board
- In the event of being unable to start the exam, assistance to be requested from The University of Derby and permission sought from Awarding bodies

## 8. Disruption of teaching time in the weeks before an exam – 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**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- SLT to communicate with parents, carers and students about the potential for disruption to teaching time and plans.
- Alternative methods of learning to be made available: on-line resources, parent portal, website and staff e-mail contact.

- Alternative site arranged.
- Exams Officer to plan for deadline extensions to Awarding Bodies.
- Exams Officer to plan for submission for Special Consideration.

**9. Candidates at risk of being unable to take examinations – centre remains open**

**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Candidates at risk of being unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal

**Centre actions**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate the impact of the situation:

- Exams Officer to liaise with SLT and students to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with the Awarding Bodies.
- Students advised to sit examination in next available series.
- Application to be made to Awarding Bodies for special consideration for students where the minimum requirements have been met. Students are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.

**10. Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examinations period**

**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations

**Centre actions**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exams Officer will notify Awarding Bodies immediately.
- Alternative venue (University of Derby) to be used in agreement with relevant Awarding Bodies.
- Students offered to sit examination at next examination series.
- Application to be made to Awarding Bodies for special consideration for students where the minimum requirements have been met. Students are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.

**11. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers**

**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to the centre in advance of examinations

**Centre actions**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Awarding bodies to provide Exams Officer electronic access to examination materials. Provision to be made to receive process and store material securely.
- Exams Officer will identify where scripts have not been received 10 days prior to the date of the exam.
- Awarding bodies to source alternative couriers for delivery of hardcopies.

**12. Disruption to transporting of completed examination scripts**

**Criteria for implementation of the plan**

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed examination scripts/assessment evidence

**Centre actions**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Exams Officer to contact Parcelforce in the event of failure to collect and obtain confirmation of collection.
- Awarding bodies to be advised immediately.
- Secure storage to be arranged for completed scripts until the Awarding Body has made alternative arrangements.

**13. 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
- Completed examination scripts/assessment evidence does not reach awarding organisations

**Centre actions**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the Awarding bodies.
- Candidates to re-take affected assessment at subsequent assessment window.
- Application to be made to Awarding Bodies for special consideration for students where the minimum requirements have been met. Students are only eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but are affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.

## 14. 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**

Action taken at UTC Derby Pride Park to mitigate the impact of the disruption:

- Arrangements to be made to access and distribute results at an alternative venue.
- Exams Officer can access the network off-site.
- Exams Officer can download the results directly from the Awarding Body web-sites.

**Further guidance to inform and implement contingency planning**

**Ofqual**

Joint contingency plan in the event of widespread disruption to the examination system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted

**JCQ**

General Regulations for Approved Centres www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

Guidance notes on alternative site arrangements www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/online-forms
Instructions for Conducting Examinations www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations

A guide to the special consideration process www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance

Joint Contingency Plan www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/other-documents

Notice to Centres - Examination contingency plan/examinations policy
www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/notice-to-centres--exam-contingency-plan/

**GOV.UK**

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: Ensuring the service runs smoothly; Contingency planning
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dispatch-of-exam-scripts-yellow-label-service