

Contingency planning for examinations - Information for centres & exam officers

Winter is approaching and with it comes unpredictable weather. In January 2010 the UK experienced adverse weather conditions with heavy snow falls and freezing temperatures, causing many schools to close and in some cases causing disruption to exams taking place. With the January exam series fast approaching it is important to consider what contingency plans you should have in place.

Centres should prepare plans for disruption to examinations as part of their wider emergency planning and ensure that relevant staff are familiar with the plan. Centres should consider the arrangements they have in place to communicate these arrangements to students, parents and staff in the event of any disruption to examinations.

In the event that the head of centre decides the centre is unable to open for scheduled examinations the relevant awarding organisations should be informed as soon as possible. Awarding organisations will be able to offer advice regarding alternative arrangements for holding examinations that may be available, and options for students who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.

The qualifications regulators, awarding organisations and government departments have prepared and agreed a joint exam contingency plan for the examination system to ensure consistency of response in the event of widespread disruption. The contingencies applied will depend on the context of the disruption and aim to safeguard the interests of candidates while maintaining the integrity of assessments and qualifications. The plan details the responsibilities of examination centres and awarding organisations in the event of disruption.