

CAFRE Examination Contingency Plan

Issue	Date of Issue	Date of Next Review	Responsibility of	Date approved by CAFRE Education Management Team
1	February 2023	February 2024	Learner Services Branch	February 2023
2	February 2024	February 2025	Learner Services Branch	February 2024

	CAFRE Quality Manual Index	CAFRE Website (Tick as appropriate)
Document available	√	√

This document can also be produced in alternative formats upon request

Version History

CAFRE Examination Contingency Plan

Version	Description of Changes	Date
02	Addition of point (xv) guidance on collecting evidence to ensure resilience	13/02/2024

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1. Introduction

CAFRE as an approved centre is expected to have in place an examinations contingency plan.

2. Scope

This examination contingency plan applies to all CAFRE programmes.

3. Purpose of the Plan

CAFRE, as an approved examination centre, aims to ensure that the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ's) General Regulations for Approved Centres (Section 5, Centre management) are fully adhered to by having in place a written examination contingency plan which covers all aspects of examination administration.

Alongside internal processes this plan is informed by the JCQ Joint Contingency Plan for the Examination System in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

This plan examines potential risks and issues that could cause disruption to the exam process and by outlining actions/procedures that requires to be invoked in case of disruption it is intended to mitigate the impact these disruptions have on CAFRE's exam processes.

This plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that exam contingency planning at CAFRE is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

4. Possible causes of Disruption to the Exam Process

i) Examination administration officer absence at key points in the exam process (exam cycle)

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.

Entries

- Candidates not entered with Awarding Organisations for external exams/assessment.
- Awarding Organisation entry deadlines missed or late or other penalty fees being incurred.

Pre-exams

- Invigilators not trained or updated on changes to instructions by CAFRE's Quality Management Team for conducting exams.
- Exam timetabling, room allocation; and invigilation schedules not prepared.
- Candidates not briefed on exam timetables and Awarding Organisation information for candidates.

- Confidential 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 Organisations.
- Required reports/requests not submitted to Awarding Organisations during exam/assessment periods, for example very late arrival, suspected malpractice, special consideration.
- Candidates' scripts not forwarded as required for marking to the respective Awarding Organisation.

Results and post-results

- Access to examination results affecting the distribution of results to candidates the facilitation of post-results services.

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above, CAFRE will:

- Through its Education Management Team (EMT) nominate a "deputy" to cover a role/task.
- All invigilators will be updated on JCQ guidelines on a yearly basis.

ii) Student Support Officer (SSO) extended absence at key points in the exam process (exam cycle)

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.
- CAFRE fails to recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

Pre-exams

- Approval for access arrangements not applied for to the Awarding Organisation.
- Access arrangements not put in place by CAFRE.

Exam time

- Access arrangement for candidate support not arranged for exam rooms.

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above CAFRE will:

- Ensure the Examinations Administration Officer at each campus works with Student Support Officer (SSO) to identify students where applications for access arrangements may be required and these are applied for.
- The employment of external agency staff may be required.

iii) Teaching staff extended absence at key points in the exam process (exam cycle)

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Registration information not provided to the examinations administration office 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.
- Non-examination assessment tasks not set/issued/taken by candidates as scheduled.
- Internal assessment marks and candidates' work not provided to meet awarding organisation submission deadlines.

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above:

- CAFRE's Examinations Administration Officers at each of the campuses will liaise with the Programme Manager and/or SSO, if appropriate, to ensure all necessary deadlines are adhered to. Where this is not possible, the Examinations Administration Officer will liaise with the relevant Awarding Organisation and act upon advice received.

iv) Invigilators – lack of appropriately trained invigilators or invigilator absence

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Failure to recruit and train sufficient invigilators to conduct exams
- Invigilator shortage on peak exam days
- Invigilator absence on the day of an examination for example due to strike action.

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above:

- The Quality Management Team in conjunction with the Education Management Team will review the staffing on the external invigilation register at the start of each academic year and ensure if applicable sufficient external invigilator staff are recruited and trained in a timely fashion. These invigilators will be used in external exam seasons and numbers required will be increased in the event of internal staff strike action or staff absence to ensure examinations proceed as normal.
- The Examinations Officer will also be aware of the CAFRE staff available for invigilation duties at short notice and for peak exam days.

v) Exam rooms – lack of appropriate rooms

Key tasks not undertaken including:

- Examination Officers unable to identify sufficient/appropriate rooms during exams timetable planning.
- Insufficient rooms available on peak exam days.

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above CAFRE will:

- Ensure all rooms are made available within the respective campus to enable examinations to proceed.

vi) Cyber-attack

- Where a cyber-attack may compromise any aspect of delivery, CAFRE as part of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (DAERA) will follow all instructions provided by Digital Services Division).

vii) Failure of IT systems

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- IT system failure at final entry deadline
- IT system failure during exams preparation
- IT system failure at results release time.

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above:

- At all times during the system failure, the Examinations Officer will liaise with the Awarding Organisation to minimise disruption and costs incurred.
- The Examinations Office will liaise closely with Digital Services Division's staff.

viii) Emergency evacuation of the exam room (or centre lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Whole centre evacuation (or lockdown) during exam time resulting in exam candidates being unable to start, proceed with or complete their exams].

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above CAFRE will:

- Refer to and invoke its (exams) emergency evacuation policy/procedure in line with JCQ's 'Centre emergency evacuation procedure' (or its (exams) lockdown policy).
- Contact the relevant Awarding Organisation as soon as possible and follow its instructions.

ix) 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.

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above CAFRE will:

- Facilitate alternative methods of learning.
- Communicate with candidates relating to alternative methods of learning.

x) 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.

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above CAFRE will:

- Take advice offered by the Awarding Organisation on the options for candidates who have not been able to take scheduled examinations.
- Discuss alternative arrangements with the respective Awarding Organisation if a candidate misses an exam or loses their assessment due to an emergency, or other event, outside of the candidate's control.

xi) Centre at risk of being unable to open as normal during the examination period (including in the event of the centre being unavailable for examinations owing to an unforeseen emergency such as a National Lockdown)

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

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

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above CAFRE will:

- Take advice, or follow instructions, from relevant local or national agencies in deciding whether the centre can open.
- Contact the relevant Awarding Organisation as soon as possible and follow its instructions.

xii) 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.

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above CAFRE will:

- Liaise with the respective awarding organisation regarding the provision of electronic access to examination papers via a secure external network and will ensure when copies are received/made these are stored under secure conditions.
- Follow guidance provided by the respective Awarding Organisation on the conduct of examinations in such circumstances.

xiii) Disruption to transporting completed examination scripts

Criteria for implementation of the plan

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

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above CAFRE will:

- For any examinations where the centre makes its own collection arrangements, investigate alternative options that comply with the requirements detailed in the JCQ publication 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations'.
- Ensure the secure storage of completed examination scripts until collection.

xiv) Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- 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 for marking/moderation.

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above CAFRE will:

- Liaise with the respective Awarding Organisation to determine if candidate marks for affected assessments may be able to be generated based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement as defined by the Awarding Organisation.
- Where marks cannot be generated by the Awarding Organisation, candidates will be informed they may need to retake the affected assessment in a subsequent assessment series.

xv) Collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Government determines that examinations for City and Guilds Technical qualifications are not able to go ahead.

To mitigate the impact of the disruption listed above CAFRE will:

- Collect evidence using mock exams completed under exam conditions. This evidence can then be used to support alternative methods of awarding grades, such as Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) in accordance with City and Guilds guidance taken directly from Section 5 in the Emergency Situations affecting assessment delivery - Guidance for centres 2023-2024.

Reference material used in compiling this contingency plan

JCQ guidance taken directly from Section 15 in the Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2023-2024 ([ICE 23-24 Jan24revision FINAL.pdf \(jqc.org.uk\)](https://www.jcq.org.uk/examinations/ice-23-24-jan24revision-final.pdf))

City and Guilds guidance taken directly from Section 5 in the Emergency Situations affecting assessment delivery Guidance for centres 2023-2024 ([Emergency Situations affecting assessment delivery \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com/en/qualifications/emergency-situations-affecting-assessment-delivery))

Ofqual guidance taken directly from Guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system 2023-2024 ([Guidance on collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/collecting-evidence-of-student-performance-to-ensure-resilience-in-the-qualifications-system))