

Assessment and Awarding Contingency Plan

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Plan

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Introduction

NCC Education's Assessment and Awarding Contingency Plan (AACP) is designed to ensure a consistent and effective response in the event of major disruption to the examination system. The plan will be implemented in the event of major disruption to the system, such as widespread illness, travel disruption, bad weather or power failures. Implementing the plan will safeguard the interests of candidates while maintaining the integrity of the assessment system and safeguarding qualification standards. The AACP applies to all NCC Education qualifications, whether regulated or unregulated, and applies to all NCC Education Centres regardless of geographic location.

The implementation of all parts of the contingency plan is guided by the following three principles:

- **delivery of assessments to published timetables**
- **delivery of results to published timetables**
- **compliance with regulatory requirements in relation to assessment, marking and standards.**

Communication

In the event of major disruption, communication is a key factor in ensuring an effective and consistent response across all stakeholders involved including centres, candidates and others if appropriate. NCC Education is committed to:

- sharing timely and accurate information as required to meet the aims of the plan
- communicating with all stakeholders so they are aware of disruption to the assessments, the contingency measures being implemented, and any actions required of them as a result
- ensuring that any messages to the public are clear and accurate.

The scenarios covered in this plan are as follows:

- (1) disruption of teaching
- (2) disruption in the distribution of examination papers
- (3) candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis
- (4) centres are unable to open as normal during the examination period
- (5) disruption to the transportation of completed examination papers
- (6) scripts not available to be marked
- (7) NCC Education Examiners/Moderators unable to mark/moderate examination papers
- (8) Centre Markers unable to mark assignments / local examination papers
- (9) NCC Education has difficulty in meeting results schedule
- (10) NCC Education is unable to issue results as planned due to email systems failure
- (11) NCC Education is unable to issue accurate results
- (12) Centres are unable to distribute results as normal
- (13) Change of Control a Centre
- (14) Change of Control at NCC Education.

1. Disruption of teaching time – centres are closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centres are closed, or candidates are unable to attend for an extended period during planned guided learning hours, interrupting the provision of normal teaching and learning.

Recommended actions:

Where there is disruption to teaching time and candidates miss teaching and learning, it remains the responsibility of centres to prepare candidates, as usual, for assessments.

- Centres may advise candidates to transfer to a different assessment cycle
- Centres should have plans in place to facilitate alternative methods of teaching and learning.

2. Disruption in the distribution of examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Disruption to the distribution of examination papers to centres in advance of examinations.

Recommended actions:

- NCC Education to provide centres with electronic access to examination papers via email.
- The Centre Coordinator would need to ensure that copies are received, printed and stored under secure conditions
- NCC Education to source alternative couriers for delivery of hard copies if appropriate.

3. Candidates unable to take examinations because of a crisis - centres remain open

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Candidates are unable to attend at centres to take their examinations as normal.

Recommended actions:

- Centre to liaise with candidates to identify whether the examination can be sat at an alternative venue in agreement with NCC Education (for example, share facilities with other centres or use other public building (for example, British Council), if possible)
- Candidates offered an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available cycle
- Centres to apply to NCC Education for special consideration for any eligible candidates (see also NCC Education's *Special Considerations Policy CORP_03-a07*).

4. Centres are unable to open as normal during the examination period

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Centres unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.

A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform NCC Education with which examinations are due to be taken as soon as is possible. The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open or not lies with the Head of Centre. The Head of Centre is responsible for taking advice, or following instructions from relevant local or national authorities, in deciding whether the Centre is able to open.

Recommended actions:

- If possible, centres to open for examinations only
- Centres to use alternative venues in agreement with NCC Education (for example, share facilities with other centres or use other public building (for example, British Council), if possible)
- Centres may offer candidates an opportunity to sit any examinations missed at the next available cycle
- Centres to apply to NCC Education for special consideration for candidates where they have met the minimum requirements (see section 3 above)
- Centres to apply to NCC Education to sit examinations on an alternative date (this may incur a fee where new papers need to be produced).

5. Disruption to the transportation of completed examination papers

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Delay in normal collection arrangements for completed scripts.

Recommended actions:

- Centres to seek advice from NCC Education and normal courier regarding late collection
- If late collection is not possible, centres to source an alternative courier, keeping NCC Education fully informed.
- Centres are responsible for secure storage of completed examination papers until collection

6. Scripts not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan

- Large scale damage to or destruction of completed scripts before they can be marked.

Recommended actions:

- Where appropriate, NCC Education to generate candidate marks for affected assessments based on other appropriate evidence of candidate achievement, in line with NCC Education's Lost Exam Scripts Process (AQ07)
- Candidates to retake affected assessment at subsequent assessment cycle

7. NCC Education Examiners/Moderators unable to mark/moderate examination papers according to marking schedules

Criteria for implementation of plan

- NCC Education examiners/moderators are unable to mark/moderate examination papers resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates.

Recommended actions:

- NCC Education to re-allocate work to available examiners
- NCC Education to recruit/train qualified new examiners
- Prioritisation of marking to be based on results release dates
- Refer to Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plan.

8. Centre Markers unable to mark assignments / local examination papers according to marking schedules

Criteria for implementation of plan

- Centre markers are unable to mark assignments or examination papers resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by scheduled dates.

Recommended actions:

Centres to contact NCC Education at the earliest opportunity about alternative options, including:

- Centre to negotiate adjusted deadline with NCC Education
- Centre to re-allocate scripts to available markers
- Centre to recruit/train qualified new markers.

9. NCC Education has difficulty in meeting results schedule

Criteria for implementation of plan

- Significant inability to meet schedule for publication of results.

Recommended actions:

- NCC Education to establish priorities for results processing

- NCC Education to consider any options to accelerate results processing (for example, issuing results in alternative formats)
- NCC Education to liaise with partner universities regarding process of candidate progression to “top-up” qualifications if required
- Refer to Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plan.

10. NCC Education is unable to issue results as planned due to email systems failure

Criteria for implementation of plan

- NCC Education unable to distribute results due to failure of email systems facilitating results delivery.

Recommended actions:

Where results are due to be issued electronically:

- NCC Education copy results information to USB and distribute by courier
- NCC Education issue hardcopy results and distribute by courier
- Refer to Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plan.

11. NCC Education is unable to issue accurate results

Criteria for implementation of plan

- System error or failure means significant numbers of results cannot be validated as accurate or are issued and found to be inaccurate.

Recommended actions:

- Candidates, Centres and other relevant stakeholders to be informed of any incorrect results
- Manual validation of results to be carried out by NCC Education
- NCC Education Responsible Officer to inform regulators
- Refer to Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plan.

12. Centres are unable to distribute results as normal

Criteria for implementation of plan

- Centres are unable to access or manage the distribution of results to candidates.

Recommended actions:

- Centre to make arrangements to access/distribute its results at an alternative site
- If not possible, NCC Education to provide access to results directly to candidates.

13. Change of Control at a Centre

Criteria for implementation of plan

- A person or organisation obtains control of a Centre who did not have control of the organisation immediately prior to doing so, through the purchase of a controlling interest or other legal means, or
- A Centre merges with any other organisation.

Recommended actions:

- The Head of Centre or other senior executive officer will immediately inform NCC Education in full of such a change of control
- The Head of Centre or other senior executive officer will establish and implement a plan for ongoing teaching, learning and assessment activities, taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the interests of candidates are protected first and foremost as well as co
- NCC Education will take whatever steps may be appropriate to ensure the ongoing suitability of the Centre for the delivery and assessment of qualifications.

14. Change of Control at NCC Education

Criteria for implementation of plan

- A person or organisation obtains control of NCC Education who did not have control of the organisation immediately prior to doing so, through the purchase of a controlling interest or other legal means, or
- NCC Education merges with any other organisation.

Recommended actions:

- The senior executive officer(s) of NCC Education will immediately establish and implement a plan to continue with assessment and awarding activities, taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the interests of candidates are protected first and foremost
- NCC Education's Responsible Officer will inform the Regulators in the UK and, if appropriate, in other countries
- NCC Education will communicate arrangements promptly and clearly to all Centres.