

Policy Name:

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY
(EXAMS)**

Policy Type:

Statutory

Issue Date:

7th March 2025

To be reviewed:

Annually – 7th March 2026

Approved by:

Board of Trustees

Policy Owner:

Steph Brown

Glossary of abbreviations

JCQ	Joint Council of Qualifications
JCQ ICE	Joint Council of Qualifications : Instructions for Conducting Exams

1. Aims

- The purpose of this policy is to confirm the arrangements at the centre for dealing with an emergency evacuation of an examination room by defining staff roles and responsibilities and confirming the emergency evacuation procedure.
- This policy ensures compliance with JCQ regulations (JCQ ICE 25) which state that centres must have a written policy for dealing with emergency evacuation of the examination room which will be subject to inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

2. Legislation and Guidance

- An emergency evacuation is required where it is unsafe for candidates to remain in the examination room. This might include a fire, the fire alarm sounding to warn of fire, bomb alert or other serious threat.
- In exceptional situations, where candidates might be severely disadvantaged or distressed by remaining in the room, the emergency evacuation procedure may also need to be followed. This might include situations where there is severe disruption, serious illness of a candidate or invigilator or similarly serious incidents.
- As each incident may be different, advice will be sought (if applicable) from the relevant awarding body as soon as it is safe to do so (JCQ ICE 25.6)
- Where candidates are unable to return to the building to complete the examination, the relevant awarding body will be contacted immediately for advice (JCQ ICE 25.6)
- As soon as practically possible and safe to do so, the following details will be recorded:
 - The actual time of the start of the interruption

- 2) The actions taken
- 3) The actual time the exam(s) resumed
- 4) The actual finishing time(s) of the resumed exam(s)
- 5) A report on candidate behaviour throughout the interruption/evacuation
- 6) A judgement on the impact on candidates after the interruption/evacuation

3. Emergency evacuation procedure - Actions taken in the event of an emergency evacuation of the exam room

a. At the centre, the following actions (in accordance with ICE 25) are taken if an exam room has to be evacuated:

- 1) Candidates are instructed to stop writing
- 2) The attendance register is collected (in order to ensure all candidates are present)
- 3) The examination room is evacuated in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority
- 4) Candidates are advised to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room. Candidates are advised to close their answer booklet(s)
- 5) Candidates are instructed to leave the room in silence
- 6) Candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room so that there is no discussion about the examination
- 7) The time of the interruption is noted and how long it lasted
- 8) Candidates are allowed the remainder of the working time set for the examination once it resumes
- 9) If there are only a few candidates, the possibility is considered of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts collected by the invigilator) to another place to finish the examination
- 10) A full report is made of the incident and of the actions taken (and retained on file if required by an awarding body)

b. Additional actions taken:

- 1) In the event of a fire alarm, invigilators are trained to stop the exam and make a note of the time, make contact with the Exams officer to establish if the fire alarm is 'real' taking action based on this answer.
- 2) In the event of a fire in the building, candidates are evacuated through the nearest fire exist in a controlled manner and supervised away from the main student population in order to maintain security.
- 3) If the fire alarm is not considered to be an issue to the exam room, Invigilators are trained to manage the students in silence until the alarm has stopped.
- 4) When/if allowed to return to the examination room, invigilators allow candidates time to settle down, reminding them they are still under formal examination conditions and that they must not open their answer booklets until instructed to do so
- 5) Invigilators announce clearly to candidates when they may begin and how much time they have (the examination will formally restart at this point)
- 6) Invigilators record the time the examination(s) restarted and amend the displayed finishing time(s) for all candidates to see
- 7) Invigilators are trained to record as much detail on the exam room incident log when able to do so (ensuring candidates are continually supervised and giving complete attention to this duty at all times) and to ensure the exams officer is fully briefed at the end of the examination(s) to enable a full report to be submitted to the awarding body/bodies
- 8) Where not allowed to return to the examination room, or the decision is made by the appropriate authority that the examination(s) cannot be resumed, the centre's examination contingency plan will be invoked and invigilators/candidates briefed accordingly at the time.

4. Roles and responsibilities

a. The role of the head of centre:

- 1) Ensure that the emergency evacuation policy for examinations is fit for purpose and complies with relevant health and safety regulation
- 2) Ensure instructions from relevant local or national agencies are referenced and followed (JCQ ICE 25.1)
- 3) Ensures any breach of question paper security or malpractice is reported to the awarding body immediately (JCQ ICE 25.5)

b. The role of the senior leader:

- 1) Where responsible for the centre-wide emergency evacuation procedure, ensure all staff and appointed fire marshals are aware of the procedures to be followed when evacuating an exam room

c. The role of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) or equivalent role:

- 1) Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the emergency evacuation of a disabled candidate where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for the candidate
- 2) Ensure candidates are informed prior to examination of what will happen in an emergency evacuation

d. The role of the exams office/officer

- 1) Ensure invigilators are trained in evacuation procedures and how incident and actions must be recorded
- 2) Ensure candidates are informed prior to examination of what will happen in an emergency evacuation
- 3) Provide invigilators with a copy of the emergency evacuation procedure in every exam room
- 4) Provide a standard invigilator announcement for each exam room which includes appropriate instructions for candidates about emergency procedures and what will happen if the fire alarm sounds
- 5) Provide an exam room incident log in every examination room
- 6) Liaise with relevant staff prior to each examination session where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate
- 7) Brief invigilators prior to each exam session where different procedures or assistance may needed
- 8) Ensure that appropriate follow-up is undertaken after an emergency evacuation, reporting the incident to the awarding body and the actions taken
- 9) Ensure a full report of the incident is produced and retained on file (JCQ ICE 25.4)
- 10) Ensure an online application for special consideration is submitted to the relevant awarding body where candidates have been disadvantaged (JCQ ICE 25.7)

e. The role of invigilators

- 1) By attending training sessions, ensure they understand what to do in the event of an emergency
- 2) Follow the actions required in the emergency evacuation procedure issued to them for every exam room
- 3) Confirm with the exams officer, where different procedures or assistance may needed for evacuation
- 4) Record details on the exam room incident log to support follow-up reporting to the awarding body