

JCQ statement: Examinations during severe weather conditions and periods of disruption

Recent weather conditions have affected schools and colleges in many parts of the UK and JCQ awarding bodies understand the concern that this, along with a possible surge in cases of influenza, has given students preparing to take their examinations this month.

We would like to reassure students, parents and carers, schools and colleges that awarding bodies have well rehearsed processes in place to deal with these circumstances which include arrangements for ensuring that no student is disadvantaged.

It is important to note that rescheduling the examinations is not an option due to the consequences this would have across the system. For example, it would reduce significantly the amount of time schools and colleges have to teach, and students to learn, in preparation for the summer examination series. The integrity of the question papers could also be compromised, as the task of ensuring that all schools and colleges do not offer the examinations on the original scheduled date would be difficult to undertake and guarantee.

Taking all the factors in to account, drawing upon experience of previous years such as the disruption caused by adverse weather in January 2010, and in consultation with the regulators, awarding bodies have agreed the following:

- Wherever possible the examinations should be conducted according to the centre's published examination timetable.
- If conditions are so severe that a decision is made to close the school or college, whether by the local authority or the senior leadership team, or where a school or college remains open but some individual candidates are unable to reach it because of extreme weather conditions, and no alternative arrangements are able to be made for taking the examination at a different location, then the options are
 - Where candidates are entered for examinations but this is not their terminal (final) examination series, they may be entered again for the June 2011 series.
 - Where candidates are sitting units as part of their terminal examination series or no further re-sit opportunity is available, then an application for Special Consideration may be made. The candidate must meet the published criteria for Special Consideration as indicated in the JCQ publication, *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration*.

There is a published contingency plan for the examinations system at <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2010-12-13-joint-contingency-plan-nov-2011-v5.pdf>

Additional guidance is also available on the websites of individual awarding bodies and students should contact their school or college for further information.

JCQ can be contacted on 0207 638 4132 or via info@jcq.org.uk

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