

NCTJ Adverse weather conditions and periods of disruption policy

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1. Purpose

This policy ensures a consistent response during adverse weather or other disruptions, protecting learners while maintaining the integrity of NCTJ assessments.

2. Scope

It applies to learners, centres, and NCTJ staff in situations where disruptions affect teaching, exams, marking, or result distribution.

3. Definitions

- Learners: Encompasses students, apprentices, or distance learners, at any stage of their journalism training.

- Centres: Encompasses training providers, HEIs, FE colleges and commercial centres.

4. Policy statements

4.1 Principles

- Exams should run as scheduled wherever possible.
- Centres should have contingency plans for remote learning and alternative exam arrangements.
- Learners unable to sit exams due to severe weather or other disruption may be offered remote exams or rescheduled dates.
- Centres must follow security and submission guidelines for completed exam scripts.
- The NCTJ will take necessary steps to ensure results are delivered on time.

4.2 Roles and responsibilities

- Centres: Responsible for preparing learners, offering alternative exam arrangements, and securely handling exam scripts.
- NCTJ: Responsible for coordinating alternative arrangements, reallocating marking if needed, and ensuring results are issued.

5. Procedures

5.1 Teaching disruptions - centres are closed for an extended period

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Centres are closed or learners are unable to attend the centre for an extended period during normal teaching or study supported time.

Recommended actions:

- If teaching is disrupted and affects a learner's learning, the centre is still responsible for preparing them for NCTJ assessments.
- Centres may suggest remote exams, a different exam series, or an alternative exam date from the published schedule.
- Centres should have plans for alternative learning methods. Guidance on emergency planning and severe weather is available on the Department for Education website [here](#).

5.2 Learners are unable to attend an examinations because of severe adverse weather or other disruption – centres remain open

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Learners are unable to attend the examination centre to take examinations as normal.

Recommended actions:

- Centres should offer remote exams or if this is not possible reschedule to the next available date, in agreement with the head of awarding or assessment manager at the NCTJ.
- Appropriate exam fees will apply in this case. Centres should follow the special consideration policy regarding the deferral of examination fees for individual learners if appropriate. Supporting evidence will be required.

5.3 Centres are unable to open as normal during the examination period – centres close

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Centres are unable to open as normal for scheduled examinations.

A centre which is unable to open as normal for examinations must inform the NCTJ as soon as is possible and notify us of the exams that were due to be taken.

The responsibility for deciding whether it is safe for a centre to open lies with the head of centre.

Recommended actions:

- Centres to open for examinations and the examination learners only, if possible.
- Centre to use an alternative venue in agreement with the NCTJ (e.g. share facilities with other centres or use other public building, if possible).
- Centres may offer learners an opportunity to sit an exam remotely or on the next available examination date in the NCTJ examination schedule.

5.4 Assessment evidence is not available to be marked

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Large scale loss, damage to or destruction of completed examination scripts/assessment evidence before it can be marked.

Recommended actions:

- Affected learners must retake the exam at the next available date.

The NCTJ does not, under any circumstances, offer an aegrotat award.

5.5 Marking delays

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Markers are unable to mark examination scripts within the two-week marking period, resulting in a risk to the delivery of results by published results dates.

Recommended actions:

- The NCTJ must be advised immediately if there is a risk of a delay to the submission of learner marks. Additional time may be provided to markers where this is possible (i.e. if moderation is not required).
- In extreme circumstances, the NCTJ may offer to re-allocate some/all scripts to other available markers. Centres must not assume the responsibility for reallocation themselves and must consult with the NCTJ.

5.6 NCTJ unable to issue results as planned

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- The NCTJ is unable to distribute results due to failure of systems, or other adverse effect, affecting results delivery.

Recommended actions:

- If systems fail, the NCTJ will issue hardcopy results to centres, and learners can access results online as soon as possible afterwards.

5.7 Centres are unable to distribute results to learners as normal

Criteria for implementation of the plan:

- Centres are unable to manage the distribution of approved results to learners as required by the NCTJ.

Recommended actions:

- Learners on accredited courses are able to view their exam results online via their NCTJ student login area.

6. Review arrangements

The NCTJ will review this policy annually as part of the NCTJ's annual self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary, in response to customer, learner or regulatory feedback.

If you would like to feedback any views, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed in September 2027.

7. Contact us

Any queries in relation to the contents of this policy, please contact our head of awarding.

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