

Emergency Evacuation Policy (Exams) 2025/26

Policy reviewed by: Mrs Natasha Hodes and Head of Centre

Centre Name	The Purcell School
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Key Staff Involved in the Policy

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Mr Paul Bambrough
Exams Officer	Mrs Natasha Hodes
Senior Leader(s)	Mr Thomas Burns, Mr Michael Long
Head of Learning Support	Mrs Sally-Ann Whitty

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that emergency evacuation from examination rooms at The Purcell School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to ICE refer to the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting Examinations.

Introduction

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 in the examination room, 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 (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.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm the arrangements at The Purcell School 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 (ICE 25.2) which state that centres must have a written policy for dealing with emergency evacuation of the examination room which is subject to inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

1. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

Actions Taken in the Event of an Emergency Evacuation of the Examination Room

At The Purcell School, the following actions (in accordance with ICE 25.3) are taken:

- If an examination room has to be evacuated: Candidates are instructed to stop writing
- The attendance register is collected (in order to ensure all candidates are present)
- The examination room is evacuated in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority
- Candidates are instructed to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room
- Candidates are advised to close their answer booklet(s)
- Candidates are instructed to leave the room in silence
- Candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination
- The time of the interruption is noted and how long it lasted
- Candidates are allowed the remainder of the working time set for the examination once it resumes
- 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
- A full report is made of the incident and of the actions taken, and sent to the relevant awarding body.

For on-screen assessments:

- Candidates must be closely supervised if an emergency evacuation of the assessment room occurs
- Invigilators should refer to any software-specific instructions to safeguard the security of the assessment content and candidates' responses (for example, pausing the assessment for all candidates and locking the evacuated assessment room without closing down the software)
- Invigilators should understand the procedures for re-starting an on-screen assessment after an emergency evacuation of the assessment room, controlling the re-starting of the

assessment, re-setting the timing and ensuring, where appropriate, candidates can access their previous responses.

Additional actions taken:

- In the event of a fire alarm, invigilators are trained to evacuate the examination room immediately and escort the candidates to the meeting area outside Avison House and to keep the students away from other students whilst the school is being evacuated
- 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
- Invigilators announce clearly to candidates when they may begin and how much time they have (the examination will formally restart at this point) Invigilators record the time the examination(s) restarted and amend the displayed finishing time(s) for candidates to see
- 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
- When 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 Exam Contingency Plan will be invoked and invigilators/candidates briefed accordingly at the time.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Role of the Head of Centre

The Head of Centre at The Purcell School will:

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

The Role of the Senior Leader

The Senior Leader will:

- Where responsible for the centre-wide emergency evacuation procedure, ensure that all staff and appointed fire marshals are aware of the policy and procedures to be followed when an emergency evacuation of an examination room is required.

The Role of the Head of Learning Support

The Head of Learning Support will:

- Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the emergency evacuation of a disabled candidate from an examination room where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for the candidate
- Ensure that the candidate is informed prior to taking their examinations of what will happen in the event of an emergency evacuation.

The Role of the Exams Officer

The Exams Officer will:

- Ensure that invigilators are trained in emergency evacuation procedures and how an incident and actions taken must be recorded
- Ensure that candidates are briefed prior to examinations taking place, on what will happen in the event of an emergency in the examination room
- Provide invigilators with a copy of the emergency evacuation procedure in every room
- 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
- Provide an exam room incident log in every examination room
- Liaise with relevant staff and Head of Learning Support prior to each examination session where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate
- Brief invigilators prior to each examination session where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate
- Ensure appropriate follow-up is undertaken after an emergency evacuation, reporting the incident to the awarding body and the actions taken
- Ensure a full report of the incident is produced and retained on file if required by an awarding body (ICE 25.4)
- Ensure an online application for special consideration is submitted to the relevant awarding body where candidates have been disadvantaged (ICE 25.7).

The Role of Invigilators

Invigilators will:

- By attending training and/or update sessions, ensure they understand what to do in the event of an emergency in the examination room
- Follow the actions required in the emergency evacuation procedure issued to them for every examination room
- Confirm with the exams officer, where different procedures or assistance may need to be provided for a disabled candidate they are invigilating
- Record details on the exam room incident log to support follow-up reporting to the awarding body by the Exams Officer (see below).

Recording Details

As soon as practically possible and safe to do so, the following details will be recorded (see **Roles and Responsibilities** for the members of staff who will record these details):

- The actual time of the start of the interruption
- The actions taken
- The actual time the exam(s) resumed
- The actual finishing time(s) of the resumed exam(s).

Further details which may also be recorded include:

- A report on candidate behaviour throughout the interruption/evacuation
- A judgement on the impact on candidates after the interruption/evacuation.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Invigilators are trained in this procedure and understand the actions they must take in the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alert or other emergency that leads to an evacuation of the exam room.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE
Actions to be taken (as detailed in current JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations section 25.3, Emergencies)
Stop the candidates from writing
Collect the attendance register (in order to ensure all candidates are present)
Evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority
Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room Candidates must be advised to close their answer booklet
Ensure the candidates leave the room in silence
Ensure candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room so that there is no discussion about the examination
Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted
Allow the candidates the remainder of the working time set for the examination once it resumes
If there are only a few candidates, consider the possibility of taking the candidates (with question papers and scripts) to another place to finish the examination
Make a full report of the incident and of the action taken and send to the relevant awarding body