

Interruption to exams

This document sets out the actions that the nominated person and invigilator must take if an examination is interrupted for any reason. Interruptions may include an evacuation, power outage, illness, internet or technology failure, security alert, or another unforeseen event. This list is not exhaustive.

The guidance includes procedures for specific incidents, such as an evacuation, as well as general steps that apply whenever an unexpected situation occurs.

General guidance

The requirements in this section are mandatory and must be followed by anyone overseeing or invigilating an examination.

If an incident occurs before or during an examination, the nominated person or invigilator must immediately contact the Education Team (on **01268 582242**) and explain the situation. Examples include illness, a power outage, internet problems, technology failure or a security alert.

The Education Team will provide advice appropriate to the circumstances. The following examples explain the action to take in common situations.

- **Unable to download the examination paper from the portal:** CTSI will attempt to resolve the system issue. If necessary, the Education Team will email the paper to the nominated person, who must print it and take it to the examination room.
- **Internet problems:** If the paper cannot be downloaded or received by email, and it is not possible to move to another suitable location, the written examination must be abandoned. The paper must be sat at the same time as all other candidates across the UK; therefore, the candidate will automatically be deferred to the next examination cycle.
- **Invigilator or nominated person becomes unwell:** A secondary nominated person should already have been appointed for emergencies. Notify that person immediately and ensure that either the primary or secondary nominated person informs CTSI of the change so that its records can be updated.

If the invigilator becomes unwell before or during the examination, the nominated person should take over as invigilator. If the nominated person is also the invigilator, the secondary nominated person must take over.

Candidate illness

If a candidate becomes unwell before or during the examination, discuss whether they wish to begin or continue. In all cases, notify CTSI immediately.

- **If the candidate continues:** If they want their circumstances to be considered during marking and ratification, they must submit either medical evidence describing the situation or confirmation from their manager. The Education Team must receive this evidence within five working days of the examination.
- **If the candidate does not begin or continue:** They may defer to the next examination cycle. Medical evidence or an email from their manager must be provided to the Education Team.
- **Security alert:** Prioritise the safety and security of everyone involved. If it is safe to do so, notify the Education Team. If the building is evacuated, follow the evacuation procedure below. A candidate who does not wish to continue may defer to the next examination cycle.

If you are unsure what to do, call the Education Team immediately on 01268 582242.

No access to the examination building

If circumstances beyond your control make the examination venue unavailable, follow the procedure below.

Before the examination

- Provisionally book an alternative room or building in case the main venue becomes unavailable.
- Keep a copy of the examination paper with you for use in an emergency.
- Carry the CTSI Education Team contact details.
- Prepare maps or directions to the alternative venue.
- Check whether any fire alarm tests are planned. Ask for them to be postponed until after the examinations or scheduled between the morning and afternoon sessions. If a test cannot be postponed, tell candidates when the alarm is expected and add time equal to the duration of the alarm, up to one minute unless it sounds for longer.
- Check whether any building evacuation is planned. Ask for it to be postponed until after the examinations. If this is not possible, use an alternative venue so that the examination is not disturbed.

On the day: no access to the building

1. **Contact the Education Team immediately.** Provide the alternative venue details. The team will contact candidates who are not with you. For data-protection reasons, it cannot give you candidates' contact details; however, you may contact candidates if you already hold their details.
2. **Arrange support at the original venue.** Ensure someone remains there to direct candidates and provide maps. Make the same arrangement for the afternoon session if required.
3. **Delay the start if necessary.** Once the examination has begun, tell the Education Team as soon as possible. If a candidate also has an afternoon examination, that session may also be delayed. The Education Team will notify afternoon candidates of the venue change and revised start time, unless you already hold their contact details and can do so.
4. **Obtain supporting materials.** Where possible, download the notices and any other required information from the CTSI website.

Evacuation during the examination

Planned fire alarm tests

Tell candidates in advance that a test will take place and give the approximate time. Add time equal to the duration of the alarm to the end of the examination, up to one minute unless the alarm sounds for longer.

Unplanned alarm requiring evacuation

1. Tell candidates to pick up their answer booklets and question papers.
2. If more than one candidate is sitting the examination, one invigilator must collect the papers and answer booklets as candidates leave, while the other monitors them as they exit the building.
3. **Maintain examination conditions.** Candidates must not talk to one another, take their belongings or access electronic devices. Any breach will be reported to the Qualifications Panel (QP) and may result in the candidate's examination paper being voided.
4. Record the time at which the examination stopped.
5. **Complete a roll call.** For health and safety purposes, candidates may speak only to the invigilator or nominated person to confirm their presence.
6. When the all-clear is given, instruct candidates to follow the invigilator back to the examination room while continuing to observe examination conditions.
7. Once everyone is settled, restart the examination. Add the total time spent away from the room to the scheduled finish time.
8. Record the incident on the Invigilator Report Form.
9. If candidates discussed the paper or used an electronic device, record the names and Candidate ID numbers of everyone involved and provide a full account. Include any questions or answers you heard on the Incident Report Form for the QP.

Note: The Education Team will inform the QP of the circumstances so that it can consider any appropriate adjustments.

Evacuation and transfer to an alternative examination room

If candidates must transfer to another venue, remind them that examination conditions continue throughout the move and that they must not discuss the examination.

Record the names of candidates transferring together on the Invigilator Report Form.

After arrival, follow the restart and reporting steps in the preceding evacuation procedure: return under examination conditions, restart the examination, add the lost time to the finish time, and complete the required incident records.

Abandoning the examination

An examination may need to be stopped when it cannot safely or properly continue—for example, if an invigilator becomes unwell and no replacement is available, or if a serious illness requires medical intervention.

If abandonment is being considered, include the affected candidates in the discussion.

1. Follow the usual process for collecting examination answer booklets.
2. Record the time at which the examination stopped.
3. Complete all required paperwork.
4. Return the answer booklets to the nominated person, who will send them to the Education Team.

The papers will still be marked because some candidates may have achieved a pass based on the answers completed. The QP may also consider the circumstances and their likely effect on candidates whose marks are close to the pass threshold.