Exams & Assessment Policy - Appendix 1b Exam Procedures in the event of Lockdown or Evacuation

Exams Procedures during Evacuation or Lockdown

This addendum to the STCG Contingency Plan details the measures to be taken at STCG colleges in the event of an evacuation or lockdown before, during or after exams take place. The word 'exams' also covers external assessments and online exams. The term 'Exams Officer' refers to the most senior member of an Exams Team on site at the time.

STCG has developed and published a Group Security Policy for staff, students and visitors in the event of an evacuation or lockdown. Whilst referencing these, this addendum focuses particularly on the actions, roles and responsibilities relating to exam management should evacuation or lockdown become necessary.

Each college will have taken steps to train all staff in specific procedures relating to general safety. Those involved in conducting exams are trained specifically on the actions they must take to manage the security and integrity of the exam, the welfare of exam candidates and themselves, and communication of what is happening.

The trigger for evacuation or lockdown is indicated by signals through the Fire Alarm System which are clearly distinguishable from each other – <u>evacuation continuous, lockdown intermittent</u>. Both emergencies are over when the alarm stops sounding.

Invigilators will be trained by Senior Exams staff during annual training and update sessions on the conduct of exams, and students by their teachers. All exams policies, which include the contingency plan, are available on the college website.

1)   Roles and Responsibilities – Pre-exam

Head of Centre/Senior Management/Curriculum

- Ensure that all staff, including those involved in conducting exams, are trained in how to react to the alarm signals, are made aware of their responsibilities and can act effectively
- Have accountability for all exams staff and candidates during an evacuation or lockdown
- Ensure training is given to exam candidates on evacuation and lockdown procedures
- Inform parents/carers about the Group's evacuation and lockdown policies in relation to conduct of examinations

Heads of Exams/Exams Officers

- Train invigilators on each college's exam procedures for emergencies – to include identifying all access and exit points in exam rooms in case evacuation is necessary, an intruder manages to gain access to a college building, or an exam room becomes unsafe
- Train lead invigilators particularly, whose role it would be to secure the exam room during lockdown or clearly delegate this responsibility to another invigilator in the room
- Assist with evacuation and lockdown training on exams procedures for staff where applicable to the conduct of exams

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- Ensure teaching staff have informed candidates of the procedures relating to evacuation or lockdown, particularly those arriving late who cannot access the exam room due to lockdown
- Provide written evacuation and lockdown procedures for exam room/invigilator use

Invigilators

- Familiarise themselves with the centre's evacuation/lockdown procedures in relation to the management of exams as well as general safety

2) Roles and Responsibilities – On exam days

Invigilators:

- Know how to communicate with the Exams Office
- Complete attendance registers as soon after an exam starts as possible in case circumstances later arise where identification of candidates becomes necessary
- If an alarm sounds, instruct candidates on what to do, staying calm and in control
- Take necessary actions for emergencies outlined in training sessions and procedures
- Provide a written incident report on events for the Exams Office to forward to awarding bodies

Invigilators **must** know what to do if an alarm sounds, which may result in following full evacuation or lockdown procedures, or staying in the exam room until the situation is made clear.

Safety for Students with Mobility Challenges: For students with limited mobility, in the event of evacuation or lockdown it is essential that exams staff carry out the usual exam management procedures, as well as paying extra attention to the accessibility of exit routes and the potential need for additional assistance. All students must be accounted for and able to follow the required protocols safely in all exam scenarios. Exams staff are responsible for briefing invigilators accordingly. These procedures sit alongside STCG's broader safety policies which aim to uphold both the security and well-being of all students during emergencies and adhere to the South Thames Colleges Group (STCG) Group Security Policy.

Exams staff:

- Where safe/possible, liaise with invigilators in all exam rooms during an emergency
- Use exam room attendance registers to determine that all candidates are accounted for
- Communicate with Security and notify invigilators if evacuation is necessary (NB: KC only)
- Support invigilators in supervising and/or evacuating candidates, and managing their re-entry to the exam room
- Check exam rooms once exams have resumed
- Report incidents to appropriate awarding bodies or authorities and liaise with them regarding exams that may have been affected by a significant emergency

3) Exams Procedures in the event of Evacuation

Evacuation of exam rooms is in line with STCG evacuation policies, as well as practicalities dictated by each college's environment. Invigilators must make themselves familiar with fire exits and assembly points, as well as awarding body and college regulations and procedures, and act in line with these should the need arise.

Before an exam starts

If evacuation is required before candidates enter the exam room, the following applies:

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- Invigilators supervise evacuation of candidates, assemble them in an appropriate location, take the exam register, maintain silence, prohibit the use of mobile phones
- On the 'all-clear' return to the exam room and start the exam as usual

While an exam is taking place

If an evacuation is required during the exam, the following procedure for **full evacuation** applies:

- Invigilators (in rooms with multiple invigilators, either the lead invigilator or a nominated person) must be aware of the nearest fire exit and evacuation route
- Stop the exam promptly, noting the time
- Invigilators are responsible for the evacuation of candidates, who must leave the exam room in silence. If a member of staff acting as a reader, scribe etc. is present, they should support the invigilator in managing the evacuation
- Tell candidates to leave question papers and exam scripts face-down and other exam materials on their desks
- Manage candidates leaving the exam room in an orderly fashion, ideally row by row. Silence must be maintained
- Invigilators are responsible for ensuring the room is secure, and that all papers remain in the exam room
- Supervise candidates closely and make sure they maintain silence during the disruption and do not use mobile phones
- Once outside the building, candidates must be instructed to follow each college's normal evacuation procedures
- The exam attendance register must be checked so that all students are accounted for
- On the 'all clear' invigilators and candidates return to the exam room to continue and complete the exam in the normal way, restarting as soon as viable and re-calculating the time left
- If candidates cannot return to the exam room, invigilators collate and collect papers and other exam materials when possible in the usual way
- Complete an incident report stating all details and hand to Exams Office

After an exam has finished

If an evacuation is required after the exam has finished as candidates are leaving the exam room, the following procedure applies:

- Allow candidates to leave the exam room, advising them to follow normal evacuation procedures and guiding them to the nearest fire exits
- Secure the exam room, leaving exam materials behind, and evacuate
- Return to the exam room to check and collate papers before returning them to the Exams Office

4) Exams Procedures in the event of <u>Lockdown</u>

Before an exam starts

If a lockdown is required before candidates enter the exam room, the following applies:

- Instruct candidates to enter the exam room immediately and remain silent, hide under desks or sit against a wall/around a corner but not near the door, and ensure mobile phones are on silent and non-vibrate mode

- When safe and if possible, the invigilator will communicate the situation to the Exams Office, ensuring all mobile phones/walkie talkies are on silent and non-vibrate mode
- When safe and if possible, Exams Officers will collate the information from all exam rooms to compile a record of events for onward reporting as needed
- Invigilators will take these 6 actions:

  i. Lock windows and close all curtains and blinds
  ii. switch off lights
  iii. Lock doors if possible; use tables or other furniture if available to barricade the entrance to the room
  iv. Take an attendance register if possible, or do a head count
  v. If the threat is a chemical or toxic release, instruct candidates to cover their noses and mouths (their own clothing can be used) and attempt to use anything to hand to seal up cracks around doors and any vents into the room
  vi. Where possible not leave the exam question papers unattended

While an exam is taking place

If a lockdown is required during the exam, the following procedure applies:

- Tell candidates to stop writing immediately and close their answer booklets
- Collect the attendance register
- Make a note of the time the examination was suspended
- Instruct candidates to remain silent, leave all examination materials on their desks and hide under desks
- Where safe/possible, communicate the situation to the Exams Officer (ensuring all mobile phones/walkie talkies are on 'silent' mode)
- Take the same i) to vi) actions as before an exam starts (see section above), except for taking an attendance register
- Where safe/possible, Exams Officers will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to Security without delay
- If appropriate, where safe/possible, and following college policy, the Exams Officers (or invigilators in their absence) will initiate the emergency lockdown procedure
- Where safe/possible, Exams Officers will collect all exam papers and materials for safe/secure storage following advice from the appropriate awarding bodies

After an exam has finished

If a lockdown is required after the exam has finished as candidates are leaving the exam room, the following procedure applies:

- Stop dismissing candidates from the exam room
- Instruct candidates who have left the room to re-enter the exam room
- Instruct candidates to remain silent and hide under desks/tables
- Where safe/possible, communicate the situation to the Exams Officer, ensuring that all mobile phones/walkie talkies are on silent and non-vibrate mode
- Take the same i) to vi) actions as before an exam starts (see section above), except for taking an attendance register
- Where safe/possible, Exams Officers will collate the information from all exam rooms and forward this to Security without delay

Ending a lockdown

Invigilators:

- Ask candidates to return to their desks, remind them they are under formal exam conditions and allow a settling down period
- Allow candidates the full working time remaining to do their examination
- Re-calculate the revised finish time(s) and amend the revised finish time(s) on display to candidates
- Tell candidates to open their papers and re-start their exam
- Note how long the lockdown lasted on the exam room incident report

5) Roles and Responsibilities – Post-exam

Head of Centre:

- At the earliest opportunity ensure that any breach of question paper security or malpractice is reported to the awarding body following usual procedures

Exams Officers:

- Store all collected exam papers and materials securely pending awarding body guidance. Where this is applicable:
- Ensure appropriate follow-up is undertaken, fully reporting the incident to the awarding body and the actions taken if necessary
- Ensure an application for special consideration is submitted to the relevant awarding body where candidates have potentially been disadvantaged
- Discuss any alternative exam sittings with awarding bodies if applicable