EMERGENCY, CRISIS AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY GUIDANCE POLICY

Policy Owner: Head Office
Oversight Committee: Examinations & Standards Committee
Final Authority: Grand Council
Applies to: All I-PATH activity, including centres, examinations, qualifications and CPD
Review Cycle: Annual or following a significant incident

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how International Performing Arts & Theatre Limited (I-PATH) will respond to exceptional or emergency situations that may disrupt normal operations, assessment delivery, or centre activity.

Its purpose is to ensure that:

- learner safety and welfare are prioritised
- assessment integrity and standards are protected
- disruption is managed fairly and consistently
- examinations and qualifications continue where possible
- decisions are transparent, proportionate and auditable
- I-PATH meets Ofqual expectations relating to continuity, fairness and public confidence

2. Scope of Emergencies Covered

This policy applies to any serious disruption or emergency, including (but not limited to):

- pandemics or public health emergencies
- war, armed conflict or international instability
- terrorism or national security incidents
- civil unrest or public disorder
- natural disasters (e.g. flooding, earthquakes, extreme weather)
- major infrastructure failure (power, internet, transport)
- government-mandated closures or restrictions

This policy applies whether the disruption is local, national or international.

3. Core Principles

In any emergency situation, I-PATH is guided by the following principles:

1. **Safety first** - the welfare of learners, staff and examiners is paramount.
2. **Standards protection** - assessment validity must not be compromised.
3. **Fairness and equity** - learners must not be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged.

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4. **Proportionality** - responses must be appropriate to the scale of disruption.
5. **Continuity where possible** - alternative delivery methods will be considered.
6. **Transparency** - decisions will be clearly communicated and documented.

4. Decision-Making and Governance

4.1 Authority

In an emergency, operational decisions are led by I-PATH Head Office, with oversight from:

- the Examinations & Standards Committee, and
- the Grand Council where strategic or high-risk decisions are required.

4.2 External Guidance

I-PATH will take account of:

- UK Government guidance
- public health or civil authority advice
- awarding organisation instructions
- relevant international guidance where activity occurs outside the UK

5. Impact on Teaching and Learning

Where normal teaching or rehearsal activity is disrupted:

- centres and teachers must prioritise safety and legal compliance
- alternative delivery methods (e.g. online learning) may be used where appropriate
- safeguarding requirements continue to apply at all times
- centres remain responsible for their own risk assessments

6. Impact on Examinations and Assessment

6.1 Examination Delivery

Depending on circumstances, I-PATH may:

- proceed with examinations as scheduled
- postpone or reschedule examinations
- move examinations to:
    - Live Video Examination (LVE), or
    - Recorded Video Examination (RVE), where permitted
- temporarily suspend examination activity

Any changes will be made in line with the Assessment Policy and RVE guidance.

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6.2 Assessment Integrity

In all cases:

- assessment standards must remain consistent
- examiner independence and judgement must be preserved
- AI misuse, impersonation or manipulation is strictly prohibited
- reasonable adjustments and special consideration may apply

7. Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Emergency situations may give rise to:

- illness or injury
- trauma or displacement
- restricted access to facilities or technology

In such cases, learners may be eligible for:

- Reasonable Adjustments, or
- Special Consideration,

in accordance with the relevant I-PATH policy.

8. Centre Responsibilities

Approved Examination Centres must:

- conduct their own risk assessments appropriate to the situation
- comply with local laws and official instructions
- inform I-PATH promptly of any disruption affecting examinations
- follow I-PATH instructions relating to alternative delivery or suspension

Centre approval status may be temporarily adapted to support safe delivery.

9. Communication

I-PATH will:

- communicate decisions clearly to centres, teachers and examiners
- provide written guidance where assessment arrangements change
- publish updates on its website or via direct communication
- ensure awarding organisations are informed where relevant

Centres are responsible for communicating appropriately with learners and parents/carers.

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10. Fees, Bookings and Rescheduling

Where disruption is outside the control of centres or learners:

- I-PATH will act reasonably and proportionately
- bookings may be deferred, rescheduled or transferred
- specific arrangements will be communicated at the time

11. Appeals and Complaints

Decisions taken under this policy may be:

- reviewed through the Complaints Policy (procedural concerns), or
- considered under the Appeals Policy where assessment processes are affected

Academic judgement itself remains non-appealable.

12. Record-Keeping and Audit

I-PATH will:

- document decisions taken under this policy
- retain records for audit and regulatory purposes
- review responses post-incident to identify improvements

Anonymised summaries may be reported to the Grand Council.

13. Policy Review and Lessons Learned

Following any major emergency:

- this policy will be reviewed
- procedures may be updated
- guidance may be strengthened based on experience

14. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Assessment Policy
- Centre Approval Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Appeals Policy
- Complaints Policy

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15. Contact

For urgent matters relating to emergency disruption: info@i-path.org

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