



London Professional Academy

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BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

A Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is a formal, strategic document that outlines how an organisation will continue to deliver its critical services and operations during and after a disruptive incident. Our BCP focuses specifically on restoring IT infrastructure (servers, data, networks) and takes a much broader view. It focuses on people, processes, premises, and technology to ensure that the organization can function at an acceptable level during a crisis.

For an institution like The London Professional Academy (LPA) , a BCP would answer the question: *"If a major disruption happens (e.g., a cyberattack, a fire in the building, a pandemic, or a staff walkout), how do we ensure students can still access learning, assessments can still be marked, and payroll is still processed?"*

Here is a breakdown of the key components typically found in a BCP:

1. The Core Objectives

A BCP is designed to minimize:

- Operational Downtime: Reducing the time core functions (like teaching or student support) are unavailable.
- Financial Loss: Mitigating the cost of the disruption.
- Reputational Damage: Ensuring students and stakeholders maintain trust that the institution is stable.
- Legal/Regulatory Breaches: Ensuring compliance with awarding body requirements even during a crisis.

2. Key Components of a BCP



A comprehensive BCP usually contains the following sections:

Component	Description
Business Impact Analysis (BIA)	This is the research phase. It identifies critical functions (e.g., "Exam invigilation", "Safeguarding reporting") and quantifies the impact of losing them. It defines the Recovery Time Objective (RTO) —how quickly a function must be restored.
Risk Assessment	Identifies the specific threats to the organization (e.g., flooding in London, failure of Student Record System, loss of key faculty).
Emergency Response	Immediate actions taken in the first minutes/hours of an incident (e.g., evacuating building, activating the crisis comms team, ensuring student safety).
Crisis Management Team	Defines who is in charge during the disaster. It outlines the chain of command (e.g., Principal, Head of Operations, IT Lead) and their specific roles (who speaks to the media, who coordinates with awarding bodies).
Communication Plan	Details how the academy will communicate with staff, students, and external stakeholders (e.g., awarding bodies, Ofsted/OfS) if the usual systems (email, website) are down. It often includes emergency SMS gateways or a dedicated hotline.
Recovery Procedures	Step-by-step instructions for restoring critical business functions. This includes alternate work locations (e.g., moving classes fully online or to a backup campus), workarounds (e.g., if the server is down, using paper registers to prove attendance compliance), and IT failover.

3. Example Scenarios for an Educational Academy

To make this concrete, here is how a BCP applies to an institution like LPA:

- **Scenario A: IT Outage (Ransomware)**
 - *Without BCP:* All teaching stops because the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) is down. Staff cannot access student records. Registration cannot be completed.
 - *With BCP:* The IT team isolates the breach. The BCP activates "Offline Mode"—tutors use printed registers to satisfy attendance monitoring requirements;



lecturers use Zoom links stored on a separate cloud system to continue classes; assessments are extended by the number of days lost.

- **Scenario B: Building Denial (Fire or Flood)**

- *Without BCP:* Classes are cancelled indefinitely. Students demand refunds.
- *With BCP:* The Crisis Management Team activates the Remote Teaching Protocol. All face-to-face classes shift to synchronous online delivery within 24 hours. Administrative staff are directed to work from home or a pre-arranged secondary site. Student services are handled via a dedicated phone line.

- **Scenario C: Loss of Key Personnel**

- *Without BCP:* A key module leader leaves suddenly, and the module cannot run, delaying student graduation.
- *With BCP:* The Succession Plan (part of the BCP) identifies cross-trained staff who can step in immediately. The Knowledge Transfer section ensures all assessment briefs, mark schemes, and handover notes are stored centrally, not just on an individual's personal drive.

4. Testing and Maintenance

A Business Continuity Plan is not a "set and forget" document. For it to be effective, it must be:

- **Tested:** The academy should run a "tabletop exercise" (a simulation) annually. For example: *"It is 9:00 AM. The server room has flooded. What do we do?"* This tests whether the communication tree works and if staff understand their roles.
- **Reviewed:** The BCP should be reviewed at least annually or whenever there is a major change (e.g., moving to a new campus, implementing a new Student Information System, or a significant change in awarding body regulations).



Summary

For London Professional Academy, a Business Continuity Plan is essentially an insurance policy for operations. It ensures that even under duress - whether a cyberattack, a pandemic, or a utility failure – the Academy can uphold its duty of care to students, maintain regulatory compliance, and protect its academic reputation by ensuring that teaching, learning, and assessment continue with minimal interruption.

