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Instructions for exam candidates: Taking online examinations

This document is for the use of students registered to take examinations with The Chartered Governance Institute and as a reference for our remote invigilators and Assessment Review Panel members. This content is sourced from, and links to the examination policy and procedure and The Chartered Governance Institute's instructions for invigilators.

Exam candidates should also read the related guidance 'Instructions for exam candidates: Extenuating Circumstances' and 'Enquiries about exam results'.

Updated November 2020

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Introducing online examinations

Introduction
From the November 2020 session, examinations will move online and we do not have any plans to return to physical exam centres.

To sit your examination, you will need to log in to an online platform where you will be able to see the examination paper and type answers to the questions.

While using the online platform you cannot access other resources on your computer so the examinations will remain 'closed book'. You will be observed remotely, using your webcam and a second device such as a phone, by live invigilators who will be able to see your screen as well as your exam environment.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have the right conditions and equipment to take the examination online, and to follow our pre-exam instructions.

This guidance will take you through the conditions of the examination and some of the rules in more detail.

Our partners
Our partner organising the examination platform is Certify Ltd. Certify uses ProctorExam software to manage the invigilation and the platform within which you will see the questions and write your answers is called Rogo.

System and requirements

Equipment
You will need a computer which you can type on, with internet connection, webcam and a microphone. If you have a laptop, then webcam and microphone are probably already built in. If you are using a desktop computer you may need to attach these. You will not be able to use a tablet or phone to complete your examination because you need to have a keyboard to type.

To aid exam security, you need to set up another camera in the room, usually positioned to the side of your desk. For this, you will need to have a smart-phone or tablet device with camera and WiFi connection.

With regard to the computer:
- It can be connected to the internet by ethernet cable rather than WiFi – this would usually make a more secure connection.
- You can have an external keyboard connected to a laptop to make typing more comfortable.
- You cannot have an external monitor connected to a laptop, for reasons of exam security.

With regard to the phone or tablet you are using for the second camera:
- This will need to have a mobile app installed, so you will not be able to use a laptop or computer as the second device.
- It will need to be positioned to the left or right of your desk, so the invigilator can see you and your whole work-space.
- It will need to be positioned upright in portrait mode.
- It is on flight mode but WiFi connected.
- The ProctorExam Remote Exams app will prevent it from going into sleep mode.
- You need to leave the device on charge.

Technical requirements and downloads
Your computer will need to have the latest software updates and a stable internet connection with a speed of at least 6mbps.

The portal used for the examination runs on the Google Chrome browser with ProctorExam extension. You will need to install this software on your computer and an app, 'Proctor Exam Remote Exams', on your second device. This is a mobile app – please search for it on Google Play or the Apple Store.

Full specifications for your computer are listed at the end of this document – if you are not sure whether you meet these requirements you should be able to find most of the information in your computer's 'Settings' menu – look for 'About' or 'Specifications'.

Information about these downloads is available in the MyCG area 'Online exam instructions' and is included on the emails you receive in advance of the exam.

Exam conditions
You will need to be in a room on your own, where no one is likely to enter or disturb you while taking the examination.

Your workspace will need to be clear and there will need to be space around your computer so that you can show the invigilator behind your computer and under your desk, for example, before the exam starts.

You will be required to show photo ID as part of the remote invigilation process – this needs to be a passport, national ID or driving license.

Exam timetable
This is available in the MyCG area, under 'Examinations'.

If you are based in or around the UK then the examination will start at 9am. For most other countries, your examination will start at the equivalent of 09.00 GMT in your local time.

For example, on 16 November 2020 when it is 9am in London (GMT) it will be 10am in Luxembourg (CET). Students in Luxembourg will start their exam at 10am in their local time, and at the same time students in the UK will start their exam at 9am local time.

Students in certain areas which are behind UK time (such as the USA and Caribbean) will start their exam at the equivalent of 2pm in the UK (14.00 GMT).

Exam times
The official time limit for all exams is the same as at the November 2019 session. For Qualifying Programme examinations, for example, the time is still 3 hours, with an additional 15 minutes reading time at the start. However, as the November 2020 examination is the first we are delivering online, we are adding an extra 15 minutes to the writing time for all exams.

The extra 15 minutes we are adding at this session is to provide reassurance if you have problems connecting at the start, or if the connection is lost during the examination. If this happens, we do not want you to worry, because you will know that some extra exam time has already been allocated.

Remote invigilation and recording
You will access the Rogo platform via a link provided by Certify in advance of the examination. This means that an invigilator will be online with you while you take your exam. They will be able to see what is happening on your computer screen and will also be observing you via your webcam (face-on view) and a second camera to the side of your work-space. There is a chat function with the invigilator so they can step in if they notice anything going wrong, and so you can alert them to any problems.

You can see examples of remote invigilation in action in the 'Online exam instructions' page on MyCG.

Visual and audio recordings from both cameras are recorded and retained by our partner Certify for a six-month period, after which they are deleted. This is so that they can be reviewed if there are enquiries about results, appeals or other legitimate reasons to go back to review the session. The access would only be granted to senior members of the Education and Learning team, who may need to show it to Examination Board members for a decision.

Exam set-up
You will receive an email from Certify before the examination date which asks you to run a test on your equipment. After you successfully complete the test you will receive a second email with your link to access the exam on the day.

This email will instruct you to log in 20 – 30 minutes before the start time so that you can do the pre-exam set-up procedure. This includes:
- Taking a photo and doing audio test on your computer.
- Showing your photo ID.
- Showing the invigilator the objects you have on your desk, such as your calculator.
- Using the second device to show around and under your work-space and behind your computer.
- Setting up the second device in position to act as a camera during the exam.

The photo ID you use needs to be a passport, national ID or driving license.

Answering exam questions

The platform which gives you access to the questions and allows you to write answers is called 'Rogo'. We have arranged trials of this platform for students entered for exams, and there are documents and videos demonstrating how it works in the 'Online exam instructions' area of MyCG.

The system gives you navigation options, allowing you to click 'Next' to work through the paper in order, or to jump straight to the question you want. The navigation menu shows you which questions you have not attempted and you can also flag any you want to come back to.

Each question and its answer box will appear on the same page. You have to type your answers to the questions in the answer box. The answer box has the same basic functions as Microsoft Word or other word-processing tools, allowing you to use underline or bold, to create tables or to insert symbols.

If you are taking a finance examination, the function to insert tables and symbols can be used to set out your answers.

You can just click a tab on the screen to show the formulae for finance examinations or the pre-released case study for exams in Part Two of the Qualifying Programme – but you are also allowed to print these documents for reference (see next section 'Examination rules').

Examination rules

As your examination will be observed by an invigilator, we can let the invigilators know which rules we apply to these exams. This means we are able to allow some off-screen activity, such as making notes on your desk, which would otherwise not be allowed. Some of the rules for such activity are set out below.

Reading time

If your examination has a 15 minute reading time, this will begin at the start time and you will be able to read through questions, make notes (on paper or on screen) and plan answers. You cannot start writing your answers until the 15 minute reading time is over. The invigilators will let you know when you can start writing.

Taking notes

You will be allowed to use paper and make notes, for your own use, off screen. You will not be able to submit these notes to us, they will be for your own reference during the examination only. You must write your answers to the questions on-screen.

You will be asked to show the note paper you intend to use to the invigilator before the examination starts and after. Your note-paper must be completely free of any writing, diagrams or other content when you show it to the invigilator before the exam starts.

In order to keep the set-up time brief, please keep a maximum of six sheets of A4 paper on your desk at the start of the exam. You can have more paper accessible in the room, but do not keep it on the desk.

Printed materials

The formulae and tables for the 'Interpreting Financial and Accounting Information' exam are included on-screen but you can also find them at the end of past papers and you can print a copy of this. You will be allowed a printed copy but will need to show the invigilator that it is not annotated, highlighted or marked up in any other way.

Similarly, if you are taking a Part Two examination you can print off the pre-released case study and keep it on your desk. It will need to be a copy without mark-up or notes, and the invigilator will check this.

Using spell-check function

You access the examination platform via an internet browser so spell check will not work in the browser in the same way as it does in a program like Microsoft Word. If you have spell-check turned on within the browser it may show you words which it has detected as mis-spelt, but it will not allow for auto-correction. We ask that you turn spell-check off within the browser while you sit the exam. To do this in advance of the exam:
- Open Google Chrome browser
- Go to the main menu (three dots in the top right corner)
- Choose 'Settings'
- Choose 'Advanced'
- Choose 'Spell check' and switch off the button at the top of that section. If you have switched to 'off' it should be white rather than blue.

Our markers know that you are completing the examination without spell-check and will focus on the content of your answer, rather than the accuracy of grammar or spelling.

Toilet breaks

For many organisations setting online examinations, students are not permitted to take breaks for any reason. We would encourage you to take the examination without a break, but it will be allowed if you really need it.

If you do find that you need a break during the examination for any reason, you can let the invigilator know through the chat facility and should be aware of the following rules:

- You should wait for permission from the invigilator before you leave.

- Your examination time will not be paused while you take a break.

- You are expected to return as soon as you can, with the expectation that you will be no longer than a few minutes.

- Breaks will be logged and you will only be allowed one.

If you know in advance that there is, for example, a medical reason for you to require a break during the examination, let us know as soon as possible before the exam date.

Calculators and other technology

You will be allowed to use your own calculator but will not be able to use another device, such as a smart-watch or mobile phone, as a calculator. You will also be asked to show the invigilator your calculator before you start the exam.

You will be asked to show that you are not wearing any devices such as smart-watches or headsets which can be connected to another device or used to communicate.

Food and drink

You will be able to have a bottle of water on your desk and drink from it during the examination – please use a bottle instead of a cup or glass. To avoid accidents on your workspace and to make observation easier for the invigilators, we ask you not to eat during the examination.

Lost connection

The partners we are working with to provide the online examining platform have experience of delivering exams all over the world, and are familiar with connectivity issues. The examination portal is designed to re-connect automatically if the connection is lost, and in any event your session is saved so that you can pick up where you left off. In most cases, candidates should be able to re-connect and continue with the examination.

Remember that for the November 2020 session we have added an extra 15 minutes to the exam time in case of any difficulties.

If you experience longer time delays and this is verified by the invigilator, we will be able to allow extra time at the end of the examination.

Special circumstances

The process by which you submit a request for adjustments on the basis of medical or long-term conditions will stay the same and you can contact the Examinations team at enquiries@icsa.org.uk to start this.

We will be able to give invigilators instructions about individual candidates so they are aware of any adjustments being made.

Further information

Links to online guidance:

Examination guidance

Examination timetable and key dates

Frequently asked questions

If you have any enquiries, please email enquiries@icsa.org.uk using the subject 'Online examinations'.

Full technical specifications
These are the specifications required for your equipment to work with the remote invigilation software. You will need to check that your computer meets the specifications – if you are using Windows, go to 'Settings' and 'About' to find this.

CPU:
- Intel Core 2 DUO and newer versions with SSE2 support
- AMD Athlon x2 and up
- 2 cores and up
- 1,8 GHz and up

Operating system:
- Windows 7(x64) and up
- OS X Yosemite 10.10 and later versions

RAM: 2 GB and up

Web-browser installed:
- Chrome (the latest version)with Proctor Exam extension

Available space on HD 500 Мб

Stable internet connection

Internet connection speed from 6 Mbps and up

Standard webcam, either built into laptop or connected via USB