

Frequently Asked Questions – Online Assessment – 9 July 2020

Section A – IT information

1. What is remote invigilation and how does it work?

Remote invigilation uses technology to allow students to take exams online at home, or at a place of their choosing e.g. an office or another quiet private room. Students should contact their employer should they wish to arrange using an office.

Students will be given an exam start time in their exam registration notification and they will complete the exam in the allocated time, under similar conditions as an exam hall. The start times are outlined in Q.16 and explained in the demonstration videos.

The exam will be invigilated remotely via each student’s webcam, microphone and screen-share. The invigilation tool will monitor what the student is doing on-screen, as well as checking that the room is quiet with only the student in the room.

2. What equipment do students need to take remotely invigilated exams?

In order to sit the exams online, students will need to use the Google Chrome web browser and to add the Proctorio Google extension to their laptop, PC or Mac device before they start their exam. Students must use a PC or laptop and cannot use a tablet to complete their exams. The extension will be used to capture their webcam, audio and screen throughout the exam. Students must close all applications with the exception of Google Chrome before starting the exam. Students will identify themselves and once they begin the exam the Proctorio extension will force the exam in full screen, preventing students from inadvertently accessing other applications and websites for the duration of their exam. If a student attempts to navigate away from the exam page a warning will display on the exam screen and they must resume the exam with 30 seconds (cumulative) to prevent removal from the exam. If a student is removed from the online exam, they can re-enter the exam but must log back in and complete the Proctorio checks again before recommencing the exam. This time is taken from the overall exam duration. Any attempt to challenge the secure environment will be recorded and highlighted.

System Requirements				
	Windows	MAC	Linux	Chrome OS
Operating System	Windows 7+	macOS 10.12 Sierra+	Ubuntu 18.04+	Chrome 58+
Processor	Intel Pentium or better	Intel	Intel Pentium or better	Intel or ARM
Free Disk Space	250 MB	250 MB	250 MB	250 MB
Free RAM	2 GB ¹	2 GB ¹	2 GB ¹	1 GB ¹
Internet Speed	1MBps Upload and 1.5MBps Download			
Microphone	Any microphone, either internal or external			
Webcam	320x240 VGA resolution (minimum) internal or external			
Browser	Google Chrome			

Screen resolution:	1280x800
Hardware requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mouse and keyboard • Monitor: Recommended 15" or higher • Processor capacity: 1GHz or faster • Memory: 1 gigabyte (GB) (32-bits) or 2GB (64-bits) and for video double at least. • Free Hard disk space: 2GB for browser and caching • Internet Access: Wired connection • Graphical card: For video 64MB of Ram
Additional Information	1. Free RAM is the minimum amount of memory that is not in use by other applications.

3. Can students check if their device will work with the assessment platform prior to the exam? (Updated)

Yes, students can test their device prior to the exams. Students need to download the **Proctorio Google Chrome** extension. The test will include testing students' microphone, camera, internet connection and system performance on the device they will be using for the exam. The system test students carry out should be in the room the student will be sitting the exam, with the device they will be using on the day of the exam. **Virtual machines and proxy connections are not supported.** Once students have downloaded the Proctorio Google Chrome extension they should log into the online assessment platform <https://taxinstitute.cirrusplatform.com> to commence the test assessment called "Irish Tax Institute Sample Proctorio Exam for Student Testing". Students should watch the online Remote Exam Invigilation demonstration video, which explains the remote invigilation system. Students should also read the accompanying Instructions document which explains how to use Proctorio before carrying out the test (both available on Blackboard). Students should use the Proctorio support chat if any issues arise.

4. Can a student complete the exam on their office device?

We are working with IT Departments of the large employer firms. Students should check in with their IT Departments in advance of testing their office device to establish whether there are any constraints in their firm. For example, where a student sits the exam in an employer's office, the firm may require the student to log on to their guest Wi-Fi and students will need to organise this in advance. (However, please note that a wired internet connection is recommended as it is the most stable connection and least likely to experience performance issues or interruptions – see Q.8). Where there is any issue with running the online exams on the firm's device, students should sit the exam using their own personal device. We will be asking all students to test their device in the room they will be completing their exam, in the weeks prior to the exam. By carrying out the system tests with the device students are using, in the room they are taking the exam, it will mitigate issues arising on the day of the exam. **Virtual machines and proxy connections are not supported.**

5. Can students use a wireless mouse and keyboard?

Yes, a wireless mouse and keyboard can be used.

6. Can students use a second screen whilst taking the exam? (Updated)

No, a second screen is not permitted while taking the exams. Where students have two screens, they must shut down their second screen prior to the exam. If a student does not shut down the screen once logged onto the assessment platform the second screen will automatically shut down for the duration of the exam. Students may not project their laptop screen to another monitor, the system will identify this as two screens even if the laptop is closed or the display is set to only display within computer settings.

7. If technical issues occur on the day will students be able to log in on another device?

Yes, students will be permitted to log onto another device provided it meets the minimum specifications as detailed above. However, as outlined previously we will be asking all students to test their device in the room they will be completing their exam, in the weeks prior to the exam. By carrying out the system checks with the device students are using, in the room they are taking the exam it will mitigate issues arising on the day of the exam.

8. What should students do if they have concerns in relation to poor broadband access in the location they reside? (Updated)

It will be the student's responsibility to ensure that their chosen exam room has a reliable broadband service and does not have connectivity issues.

Students should ensure that they are connected to a stable broadband connection (1MBps Upload and 1.5MBps Download) during the exam. A wired internet connection is recommended as it is the most stable connection and least likely to experience performance issues or interruptions. If the wired connection fails or becomes otherwise unavailable during the exam, student can use a stable Wi-Fi connection with the recommended speed.

If the student's home broadband is entirely interrupted during the exam and the student is temporarily removed from the exam, the student could then attempt to reconnect their pc or laptop to their mobile phone hotspot to re-enter and complete their examination. The assessment platform will recognise and record the type of internet connection the student is using during the exam. Students will not be penalised for using their mobile phone in this manner.

We would advise that students do everything possible to ensure that they are connected to a stable internet connection for the duration of the exam. Students should watch the Internet connectivity issues demonstration video available on Blackboard.

9. What happens to a student's exam if their broadband access connection drops during the exam?

Students can log back into their exam as soon as the broadband connection is restored and resume the exam session. Alternatively, if for whatever reason a student's broadband drops completely during the exam, we advise that the student reconnects using a mobile hotspot to attempt to finish their exam (see Q.8).

The exam time will not be extended for the period the internet connection was unavailable for. If students are impacted by internet connection issues they should contact the Assessment Manager, Kristina Mooney (kmooney@taxinstitute.ie) after the exam.

10. What happens if the student has technical difficulties logging into the exam?

If a student experiences technical difficulty logging in to the exam, they may contact the Irish Tax Institute where a staff member will be able to assist. Should students require assistance with the verification checks, assistance will be provided online by Proctorio. Technical issues should be minimal provided students have carried out the required tests. We will be asking all students to test their device in the room they will be completing their exam in, in the weeks prior to the exam. By carrying out the checks with the device students are using, in the room they are taking the exam, it will mitigate issues arising on the day of the exam.

Section B – The Exam

11. Will there be any changes to the format of the exam papers for the online exams?

The format of the exam papers will remain the same as previous years.

12. What can a student access during the exam?

Students must only access the assessment platform during the exam. Students must close all applications with the exception of Google Chrome before starting the exam. The assessment platform forces the exam in full screen, preventing students from inadvertently accessing other applications and websites. If a student attempts to navigate away from the exam page a warning will display on the exam screen and they must resume the exam with 30 seconds (cumulative) to prevent removal from the exam. If a student is removed from the exam they can re-enter the exam but must log back in and complete the Proctorio checks again before recommencing the exam. This time is taken from the overall exam duration. The platform tracks and highlights any attempts to challenge the secure environment. The students will be continuously recorded.

13. Will students be able to print the exam paper during the exam?

No, students will not be able to print the exam paper during the exam.

14. Will students have access to sample past exam questions online before the scheduled exams?

Yes, students have access to sample past exam questions online. We encourage all students to view the sample past exam questions on the assessment platform in advance of the exams. Students need to be connected to the internet when viewing these (there is no offline version). When viewing the sample past questions we strongly advise students to use the same device that they will be using during the exams. Sample past exams papers for all exams have issued to students. Please do not click on the “Complete Assessment” button when viewing the sample past papers as this may restrict your access to the same paper at a later time.

Five demonstration videos providing full details and step-by-step instructions on accessing the online exams and completing the sample past exam papers have issued and are available on Blackboard.

The assessment platform is intuitive, so by taking the time to review the sample past exam papers on the platform, students should find it familiar to use for their exams.

Students may find it useful, when studying and attempting past exam questions to type their answers in Word.

15. Will there continue to be reading time?

15 minutes reading time had previously been given to students sitting the Part 2 & Part 3 exams. During this reading time students were not permitted to write in their answer booklet and the main purpose of the reading time was to select the questions students would complete. Students will continue to get 15 minutes reading time. Students are encouraged to use this time

to read the exam paper. However, during the online exams students will not be prevented from commencing to type their answers during the reading time.

16. Will the exams continue to be the same length?

In this instance and for 2020 only, the time given to all students to complete the exams will be extended by 10 minutes per hour for written exam time. For example, if an exam is 3 hours in length, an additional 30 minutes will be added to the exam time.

This additional time is provided to help students transition from traditional written exams to online exams. Students may not need to use this additional time and may submit their answer when completed.

As outlined in Q.11 there will be no change to the format of the exams.

Chartered Tax Adviser (CTA)				
Part 1	10 Aug	11 Aug	13 Aug	14 Aug
Start time: 9.30am	Personal & Business Taxes Fundamentals	Capital Taxes Fundamentals	Financial Reporting & Tax Accounting Fundamentals	Law Fundamentals
New exam length	3 hours 30 minutes	3 hours 30 minutes	2 hours 20 minutes	2 hours 20 minutes
Part 2	10 Aug	11 Aug	13 Aug	14 Aug
Start time: 10.30am	Personal Taxes: Application & Interaction	Business Taxes: Application & Interaction	Indirect Taxes: Application & Interaction	Capital Taxes: Application & Interaction
New exam length	3 hours 30 minutes plus 15 minutes reading time (see FAQ 15 re reading time)			
Part 3	24 Aug	25 Aug	27 Aug	28 Aug
Start times: 9.30am – Mon & Thurs 2pm – Tues & Fri	Advanced Direct Tax: Domestic	Advanced Direct Tax: International	Advanced Indirect Taxes	Professional Advice
New exam length	4 hours 5 minutes plus 15 minutes reading time (see FAQ 15 re reading time)			
Tax Technician / Certificates				
TT/Certs	10 Aug	11 Aug	13 Aug	14 Aug
Start time: 12noon	Income Tax & Payroll Fundamentals	Capital Taxes Fundamentals	Corporation Tax Fundamentals	VAT Fundamentals
New exam length	3 hours 30 minutes			

17. What material is permitted in the exams?

Full details have issued in the updated Student Regulations (Section 11A). This includes details of the permitted legislation (for CTA students), rates and tables, tax treaties etc. The rates and tables and the exam paper will be available on the "Resources" tab on the first part of Q.1 in each exam paper on the online assessment platform. Other material required will be on the "Resources" tab on the Introduction/welcome page of the sample paper. A hardcopy of the additional resources will not be made available and a printed copy cannot be used during the exam. A pen and 4 sheets of paper is included in the permitted material, but any handwritten work will not be submitted for correction.

18. How can students access the permitted legislation in the exams?

CTA students will be permitted to have their hard copy legislation in the exam. Students will not have access to an online version of the legislation.

19. How will the exam commence?

Students will commence the security and verification checks at the exam start time by clicking "Start Test". More details are available in the demonstration video "Remote Exam invigilation". Once the verification checks are complete the student will be brought to the Introduction/Welcome page for the exam on the online assessment platform.

As outlined in the demonstration video "Getting started" the actual time permitted to complete the exam will commence once the student clicks the "Start Assessment" key on the online assessment platform.

20. How do students save their solutions?

Solutions are automatically saved every 5 seconds.

21. How will students know how much time is left in the exam?

The time remaining in the exam will appear on the screen at all times.

22. How is the exam solution submitted?

When the exam time has lapsed, the exam will end, and students' solutions will be automatically submitted. Students will not be required to do anything further.

If students finish the exam prior to the time permitted, they can select to end the exam and their solutions will be automatically submitted. The video demonstration entitled "Submitting your exam script" illustrates this to students.

23. Can students use Microsoft Excel and Word during the exam?

No, students will not have access to Microsoft Excel or Word. Students will only have access to the assessment platform. The video tutorial entitled "Navigating the system" provides guidance on how students may want to present calculations within the assessment platform. While sample tables are provided in some questions, students are not required to use these tables. Students can create their own table, or they can use text only to answer calculation questions.

24. Can students use a headset or earphones during the exam?

No, students must not use a headset or earphones during the exam.

25. Can students take a break during a remotely invigilated exam?

As students are taking the exams at home or in an office or another quiet private room, we are hopeful that all students will start the exam refreshed and ready to focus throughout the exam time. Students should have eaten and used the toilet facilities prior to the exam commencing.

While students may take toilet breaks, the time and duration of these breaks will be reviewed during the post exam review by the Irish Tax Institute. Students are not permitted to leave their exam room for any other reason.

26. How do students register for the August exams?

Students who selected to sit the April/May 2020 exams will automatically be registered for the August 2020 exams. No further action is required if students intend to sit the exams in August 2020. Students who selected to sit the April/May 2020 exams and are unable to sit the August 2020 exams should contact their course coordinator by 3 July.

In addition, students who selected to sit the exams in August 2020 and have submitted an exam registration form will also be automatically registered.

All other students who intend to sit their exams in August 2020 should submit an exam registration form (available on Blackboard) to their course coordinator.

27. Will the Chartered Tax Adviser December 2020 exams be online?

Yes, the December 2020 exams will be online.

28. Is there an option to sit the exam in an exam hall for students who do not want to take the exam online?

No, students may only complete the exam online.

29. How long will students' examination scripts and recordings of the exams be retained?

Retention of exam material will comply with our Data Privacy and Data Retention Policies. Please refer our [Online Examination Privacy Policy](#) for more information.

30. Is the online assessment platform compliant with GDPR requirements?

Yes, the systems in use are compliant with GDPR requirements. The data that is processed and retained is compliant with the Institute's Data Privacy and Data Retention Policies. Please refer to our [Online Examination Privacy Policy](#) If you have any questions relating to the privacy of your data please email dataprivacy@taxinstitute.ie.

31. What Student Regulations apply?

The Student Regulations as set out in the 2019/20 student handbook have been updated to include Section 10A and 11A which relate to Invigilated Online Examinations which are available on Blackboard.

32. How do I set up an exam room? (Updated)

A visual instruction document on how to set up the exam room to be used by the student is available on Blackboard.

Students are advised to set up their exam room well in advance of the exam starting, making sure their device is powered on, fully charged, plugged in and socket switched on. A wired internet connection is recommended as it is the most stable connection and least likely to experience performance issues or interruptions.

- Students should remove all prohibited material outside of the room including course manuals, notes, non-permitted legislation and any other prohibited material.

- Ensure all other occupants including family members and/or colleagues within the property where the exam is being sat are aware an exam will be in progress. Advise them they may not enter the exam room during the exam. It is advised that students place a 'Do Not Disturb' sign on the door to avoid other persons entering into the room during the exam time.
- The room should be well lit.
- Students must remove earphones before starting and throughout the exam.
- Students must switch their mobile phones off and keep out of reach.
- Students must have their valid permitted ID ready.
- All duplicate monitors must be disconnected.
- Students must ensure that all other windows and programmes on their computer are closed.