![RCoA - Royal College of Anaesthetists logo]

Online Remote Invigilation - FAQs

The document applies to all written tests to be delivered in 2020/21: Primary MCQ, Final Written (MCQ and CRQ) and FFPM MCQ. It will be updated from time to time to ensure that any further questions are disseminated to all candidates sitting these tests.

1.   What is online remote invigilation?

Online remote invigilation essentially recreates the exam hall experience online. Candidates sit the test online at a place of their choosing, such as the home or workplace, using their own hardware. The exam is invigilated by a proctor who will watch a maximum of 6 candidates at any one sitting. Since some candidates may find the idea of being watched by a proctor off putting, the proctor is not visible to candidates. TestReach have been carefully selected by the College as the provider for these examinations.

2.   Why is the RCoA moving to online remote invigilation?

Restrictions on social gathering may prevent exams running at exam centres for some time. Online invigilation avoid further cancellations and gives us the option to deliver the FRCA, FFICM and FFPM exams without a change to format.

3.   What equipment do I need to sit an online proctored test? What if I don't have it?

The following minimum **system requirements** are needed:

- Intel Core i3 (or equivalent) and 4GB RAM
- A working webcam
- A working microphone and speakers
- Good continuous internet speed of 516kbps or higher
- They also recommend a screen size of at least 13" and a resolution of 1024 x 768.
- A MAC OS or Windows operating system only.

Candidates who do not have a suitable set up could potentially borrow equipment for the duration of the test. Please speak to your supervisors prior to booking.

4.   What happens before the test?

You will receive an admissions notice from the exam team detailing your test date and time, as well as instructions for setting you up for an online exam. In the weeks leading up to the test date, TestReach will contact you directly to run a system

check. This will ensure that your computer and system is set up to support a remotely invigilated exam. When you decide to book your test, check you have the necessary items needed to take the test – see System Requirements above.

5.   Can I trial the system before the test day?

It is very useful to try out the system before you sit your examination. Once you have downloaded the TestReach application, you can access a 'test tutorial' so you can be familiar with how it feels to answer exam questions in TestReach. You can take this tutorial as many times as you like.

6.   What happens on the test day?

1. Before the start of the exam, the invigilator will check that the correct person is sitting the test by checking your ID.
2. Next, the invigilators will secure the test environment by asking you to use your webcam or mobile phone to pan the room. They will be checking that there is nothing in the room that is not permitted in the test such as text books, study aids pinned to walls or your monitor.
3. When the test begins, the browser is locked to avoid internet searches during the test. In other words, you will remain within the test screen at all times for the duration of the exam. During this time, you will be watched by the invigilator in the same way an invigilator watches over an exam hall.
4. If needed, after the test, the invigilator will notify the College of any issues that arose during the exam, for example, candidate behaviour that breaks the rules of the exam. Again, the same process that happens in the exam hall.

7.   Since I do not need to attend a test centre, can I sit the exam on a day of my choice?

This is not possible. We need to maintain the security of the examination, therefore you are required to take the exam on a specified date.

8.   What happens if I am late for the exam?

Unlike a pen and paper test, being late is not an option. You should therefore ensure that you are ready to start the test when the check-in window opens. Please refer to the timings stated on your admission notice.

9.   As multiple-choice questions can be marked online, will I get my results immediately?

No. To ensure that the test is fair, question performance is scrutinised by groups of examiners after each exam. The Final CRQ component is marked by examiner with further sampling once the marking is completed. After this process, question performance is analysed by the CRQ team. The results date is not yet finalised but notification will be emailed to all candidates and posted on the website. Results are access in the section 'results', specific to each exam.

10.   If I do not attend, does this count as an attempt?

If you do not take your examination, it will not be counted as an attempt. However, only candidates with exceptional circumstances will be offered a refund or transfer.

FINAL candidates only – the CRQ and MCQ will run on two different days. Since these are two components of one test, if you only sit one component, it will count as a full attempt.

11.   If I fail the test, will it still count towards my maximum number of attempts?
Yes.

12.   Can I choose not to sit an online exam?

All written examinations will be delivered electronically for 2020. This may be extended to 2021.

13.   If I am sitting the test at home, do I have to pay the same exam fees for the online exam?

Yes, the cost to set up and deliver exams online is not insignificant and these costs must be covered.

14.   Do I have to sit the exam at home? I have children and do not have access to a quiet environment?

You do not have to sit the test at home. Any alternative venue is possible as long as it is a suitable test environment - a private room with a stable internet connection. Any relief in social distancing measures may also mean that childcare will be accessible by the time of the test. You should also look to your workplace for support with finding a suitable location.

15.   How will you prevent candidates cheating? Will it be as fair as a pen and paper test?

The ratio for online invigilation is 1 invigilator for every 6 candidates. This is significantly lower than in a live test centre whereby 1 invigilator may be responsible for 25 candidates. A candidate's test environment is scrutinised by the remote invigilator before the start of the test and the test will not start unless this environment meets the agreed criteria. The rules for the delivery of the test will be set by the College and passed to the TestReach invigilators. Candidates' browsers are locked down to prevent navigation away from the test screen. Once the test starts, the invigilator continually watches over the candidate for the duration of the test. Candidate behaviour is closely monitored during the exam by the invigilator, who will be trained in body language. The test is also recorded so it can be reviewed by the College after the test if necessary. Any concerning behaviour is noted by the invigilator and sent to the College to be investigated. The College's Misconduct Policy will apply.

16.   What if I live somewhere remote, can I still take an online test?

When it comes to dealing with internet issues, TestReach has been architected so that remotely invigilated tests can be run at lower bandwidths with fluctuating internet speeds. On most occasions, internet issues are to do with fluctuations and it is very rare that the internet connection drops completely. There is a continual connection "heart beat" monitored between the candidate's computer and TestReach's central servers to ensure that the connection remains in place. This also ensures that a situation can never arise where, for example, the connection drops but the candidate continues to enter answer data which is not being saved. There is built in "smoothing", so that if the internet speed fluctuates this does not adversely impact the candidate. If the connection speed becomes too slow, or drops completely then effectively a "shutter" comes down on the candidate's screen, alerting them to the fact. At this point, they cannot access their exam in any way, see questions or see answers they have written etc. During this time the system will continually try to re-establish the connection for a period of up to 10 minutes and as soon as a connection is detected, the shutter will lift and the candidate can continue where they left off (usually fluctuations in internet speed only take a second or two to come back online). If the disconnection continues for more than 10 minutes, then their exam will automatically terminate. In this case TestReach staff can manually resume them into the exam where they left off. Extra time could be added if required.

17.   What happens if there is a power cut?

Power outages are considered very low risk in the UK and to prevent a loss of contact with the invigilator, TestReach has back up for power outage.

18.   Who do I contact if I have technical issues on the test day?

For any issues that arise on the exam day, the TestReach technical support numbers and emails are displayed so candidates can contact TestReach directly. If there are questions about the exam paper during the exam (for example, "Question 3 does not make sense, I think the symptom should be X and not Y"), you should contract the exams team after the test to complete the question feedback form. If you have any other issues prior to or after your exam, please contact **David Rowand, the Examinations Manager, on +44 207 092 1520.**

19.   What about reasonable adjustments? Can I have extra time?

Most reasonable adjustments can be catered for in an online test, such as increased font size, coloured backgrounds, additional time and rest breaks. Please refer to the examination regulations for guidance on [reasonable adjustments](#). The normal process will apply: Each request for reasonable adjustments will be considered on an individual basis and agreed formally prior to the test. If you have special requirements for an online test, please contact the exams team directly.

20.   What if I am slow at typing?

The Final CRQ examination only requires short answers therefore candidates should not anticipate an issue with timing. Typing will also remove the legibility issues associated with handwriting. You will not be penalised for poor spelling but should ensure that the answer you wish to put is recognisable. If you require adjustments for a computer-based exam such as additional time, you will need an educational psychologist assessment with recommendations for adjustments to support your request. This should be submitted to the College on application.

21.   Could I accidentally stop the test?

You cannot accidentally shut down the test once our secure computer lockdown feature is turned on so the only way to end the test is by actually submitting it. You have the option to submit the test at any point and there is a double confirm (ie "Are you sure you wish to end the test?"). Like a pen and paper test, you can end the test early if you wish.

For any questions not covered by this FAQ, please contact the exams team at exams@rcoa.ac.uk