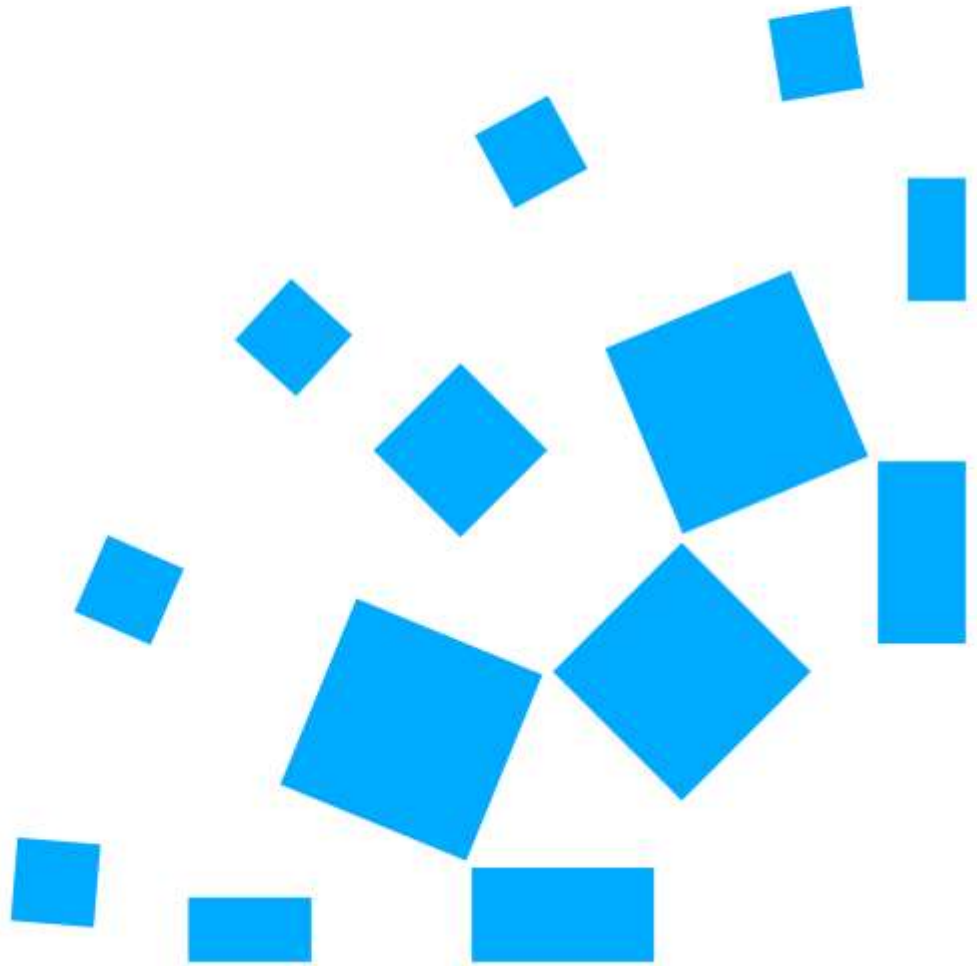


Online Examinations 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

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When will the 2020 exams be running?

The NIE scheduled for 2020 will be held, as planned, on 8 September 2020 and 24 November 2020.

The Direct Entry Superintendents' Examination will be held, as planned, on 17 November 2020.

The 2020 Inspectors' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam will be held on Tuesday the 13th October 2020.

The 2020 Sergeants' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam will be held between Monday the 9th November and Wednesday the 11th November 2020.

Candidates can take their chosen exam at a time to suit them between the hours of 08:00 and 20:00 on their specified exam date. The exam platform will close at 20:00 so you need to ensure that you have completed your exam before 20:00. If you have not done this, you may not be able to finish your exam. Please make sure you start your exam early enough so you are completed by 20:00.

How did you decide on the date for the rescheduled Sergeants' exam?

We consulted with forces and relevant stakeholders to establish an appropriate date on which to hold the rescheduled Sergeants' Exam in 2020. In identifying the date for the rescheduled Sergeants' exam we have considered the notice we need to provide to candidates for revision. We have also tried to identify a date that is least likely to impact on planned leave or those with caring responsibilities.

What if I am unable to take the Sergeants' exam on the rescheduled date?

We will not provide an alternative date for candidates who cannot sit the exam on the rescheduled date. The next Sergeants' exam is scheduled for March 2021.

Why are you still asking us to hold three dates for the Sergeants' exam?

We are currently asking candidates to reserve the three-day window for the NPPF Sergeants' Examination as previously advised. This is so further testing of the system can be conducted to ensure a suitable testing environment for the higher volume of candidates taking this exam. We will update you with the exact date/s of the NPPF Sergeants' Examination as soon as we can.

I passed the Sergeants' National Police Promotion Framework (NPPF) Exam in 2015 and I was due to sit my next Sergeants' NPPF Exam in March 2020. How long is my exam pass valid for?

We have already advised that all officers who achieved a pass in the 2015 Sergeants' NPPF Step Two Legal exam who were due to sit the exam in March 2020 will have the validity of their exam pass automatically extended until the date of the rescheduled 2020 Sergeants' exam. This will only apply to those candidates who were registered for the exam on the 31st January 2020, after the official withdrawal date. This will now be extended until 31st December 2020. This extension is only applicable to candidates who were registered for the exam in March and whose extension was due to expire in March 2020 only, and is not applicable for other candidates who do not hold a current valid pass in the exam.

Can my pass in the NPPF Inspectors' exam be extended because of the lack of Step Three processes running in force due to COVID-19?

The College and the NPPF Governance Board appreciate the challenges that forces have faced this year in regards to their promotion processes and have re-considered the position on validity extensions for Inspectors candidates. All candidates who sat the 2015 Inspectors' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam will have their validity period extended until 31st December 2020. As candidates have not yet been asked to

register their intention to take the 2020 Inspectors' Exam, this extension will be applied for all candidates who took the exam in 2015, given the limited chances for Step Three processes in 2020 in many forces.

How do I register for my exam?

You will register for your exam using the Assessment Information Management System (AIMS), an online system which has been developed by the College of Policing to support the administration and delivery of national examinations. AIMS is an intuitive cloud-based system, designed to work on a variety of mobile devices. Through the AIMS candidate portal you will register, receive notifications, joining instructions and your results and feedback.

Registration for the 2020 Inspectors' NPPF exam will open on the 1st September 2020 and close at 18:00 on the 23rd September 2020.

Registration for the 2020 Sergeant' NPPF exam will open on the 28th September 2020 and close at 18:00 on the 21st October 2020.

Registration for the Direct Entry Superintendents exam will open on the 26th October 2020 and close at 18:00 on the 30th October 2020.

Registration for the November NIE will open on the 12th October 2020 and close at 18:00 on the 4th November 2020.

I wasn't registered for the Sergeants' exam that was due to be held on 17 March. Can I register for the rescheduled exam?

No, only candidates who were originally registered to sit the Sergeants' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam in March on the 31 January 2020 can sit the rescheduled exam being held in November.

I registered for the Sergeants' exam that was due to be held on 17 March but withdrew. Can I sit the rescheduled exam?

If you withdrew before the official withdrawal date of 31 January 2020 you are no longer registered to take the exam and cannot register to sit the rescheduled exam. The rescheduled Sergeants' exam is only for candidates who were originally scheduled to sit the exam in March and were unable to do so because of circumstances beyond their control.

I was registered for the Sergeants' exam that was due to be held on 17 March and did not withdraw. Do I need to register for the rescheduled exam?

To access the exam online you will need to register for your exam through the online portal. All forces have been provided a list of their registered candidates, and only candidates on this list are eligible to register for the exam when registration opens.

When will the results of the Sergeants' exam be released?

We will be advising the timeframes for receiving results for all exams in due course and we anticipate that we will be able to issue results to candidates in a shorter than usual timeframe. We will aim to have the results of the Sergeants' exam issued by the end of November 2020. If at any point we discover this is not going to be possible we will advise you of this.

If I am unsuccessful in the rescheduled Sergeants' exam will I know in time to register for the 2021 Sergeants' exam?

Candidates who are unsuccessful in the rescheduled 2020 Sergeants' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam will be permitted to register for the 2021 Sergeants' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam.

I am on the Fast Track or Direct Entry Inspector programme. Will I be taking my exam online?

Yes, all officers taking the NPPF Inspectors' Step Two Legal Exam will take their exam online. You will not be automatically registered for the exam and will need to register in the same way as all candidates when we open registration.

How will you make sure that officers taking the exam online do not cheat?

We expect all officers to act with integrity and in line with the principles and standards of behaviour as set out within the Code of Ethics. We are exploring a number of mechanisms to minimise the risk of cheating. The design of the exams means that attempts to cheat are likely to be ineffective. Any candidate who is suspected of cheating or disclosing the content of the exam will be investigated and could have their exam result nullified and/or be banned from entering the exam in future. Candidates suspected of cheating will also be referred to their force's Professional Standards Unit.

Will the exam be supervised?

As a police officer taking a professional career examination you are expected to act with integrity and in line with the principles and standards of behaviour as set out within the Code of Ethics. You will not be supervised while you take your exam.

Can I refer to notes or the manuals during the exam?

We expect candidates to take the exam in the same way as they currently do in an invigilated environment without accessing notes or manuals. However, we appreciate that the move away from on-site invigilation for these exams means candidates may decide to access notes and manuals during the exam which we would be unaware of. Other than asking people to act with integrity, we cannot prevent this. However, the number of questions and timing of the exam will be such that taking the approach of referring to notes or manuals is likely to be ineffective or counterproductive. The questions themselves test application of knowledge so looking up individual facts is likely to be unhelpful as candidates are still required to have an understanding of the legislation in order to apply it to the scenario. The exam is designed to test that a candidate can apply the legal knowledge needed to perform successfully in the next rank. If a candidate chooses not to learn this information and to rely on looking it up, it is unlikely to be an effective way of passing the exam or embarking on a career at the next rank. However, to provide clarity on this if a candidate does refer to notes and/or manuals during the exam it will not be reported to Professional Standards or classed as a means of cheating as it is unlikely to provide candidates with any advantage. However, candidates are strongly discouraged from doing this as it is will not be an effective way to pass the exam.

Can I make notes during the exam?

Candidates may use blank paper during the exam but only for the purpose of making a note of the number of any questions they wish to return to in the exam, for instance if you decide to not provide an answer to a question initially and then go back later in the exam to provide one. Making a note of the question number will help you to find your place more easily. You should not make notes about the content of any questions in the exam and copying a question, or part of it, will be considered a breach of examination rules and reported to Professional Standards.

What platform/software will you be using to deliver exams online?

Following an evaluation of potential options we have procured an online solution through the Cabinet Office who have developed an online testing platform in conjunction with a well-established testing company, PSI. The platform has undergone extensive testing with a high volume of test-takers and is already used for Civil Service recruitment.

What will I need to take my exam online?

Your exam will be accessible from a number of devices including laptops, standalone computers and tablets. It is also accessible from a mobile phone but we recommend that candidates do not take their exam on their mobile phone because a larger screen will offer you the best chance of viewing your exam in its entirety without having to scroll. The stability of the exam platform may also not be consistent on a mobile phone. Please refer to the Online Examination Candidate Guide for more detailed information.

Candidates can use the following browsers (the software you use to access the internet).

- From any computer you can use Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Opera.
- For Apple Macs you can use Safari.
- For Windows 10 you can use Microsoft Internet Explorer 11 or Microsoft Edge.
- For Windows 7 and 8 you can use Microsoft Internet Explorer 11. You can't get new versions of Internet Explorer for older versions of Windows, for example XP or Vista.

Candidates can test their browser by clicking on the following link:

<https://eubusiness.panpowered.com/BrowserInfo.aspx>

How will I access my exam?

A few days before your exam, you will receive details about how to access the exam platform on the day of the exam and information about how to log into the exam. The URL for the online platform will be provided to candidates and forces ahead of the exam.

Candidates must ensure they remember their details about how to access the exam as the College of Policing will be unable to provide these on the day of the exam to anyone who does not have this.

Will I be able to access the platform before my exam to familiarise myself with it?

Yes, and it is very important that you schedule time to do this before the exam to ensure you won't encounter issues on the day. Approximately one week before your exam, you will be emailed a link to familiarise yourself with the platform and test your device compatibility along with details of how to test this. For anyone granted an adjustment to use speech-to-text software, you can also check the compatibility of your assistive software ahead of the exam.

Am I at a disadvantage if I have limited knowledge or experience using technology compared to other candidates?

Before your exam you will be issued with information about what devices and browsers are supported by the platform and a link to test your device compatibility. It's important you test your device and familiarise yourself with the exam platform before your exam to ensure you won't have any issues on the day.

What support will be available if I have any problems when I take my exam?

Clear guidance around accessing the exam, opportunities to test the online platform in advance and managing the volume of candidates accessing the exams at a particular time will be put in place to minimise the chance of you encountering any difficulties on the day of your exam. **You must test your device in advance of your exam to ensure it is suitable and follow all the advice in this guidance document to ensure you minimise your chances of encountering difficulties on the day.** Because there will be a high volume of candidates taking their exam online you will not be able to access direct one-to-one support during the exam or receive an immediate response to your enquiry. However, we will have a dedicated website page for exam support and an email address to direct enquiries to. Details of these will be provided with your instructions to access the exam.

Where will I take my exam?

We anticipate that online delivery of exams will enable you to take your exam in a place convenient to yourself and without the need to sit the exam at a physical examination centre alongside other candidates.

Can I take my exam in my own home?

Yes, you can take your exam at home.

How can I create a suitable exam environment at home?

Please refer to guidance in the Online Examination Candidate Guide about how to create a suitable exam environment at home.

Can I take my exam at a venue provided by my force?

Some forces have asked whether they can provide a socially distanced venue for their candidates. Whilst this is not something the College will require we will support forces to do this by providing guidance on the best way to do this. If your force decides they will provide a venue for you to sit your exam at they will tell you this directly.

Do I have to sit the exam at a venue provided by my force?

The College does not require forces to provide a physical exam venue, although if forces wish to do this they are able to. Candidates may wish to consider why they would not want to attend a venue organised by their force if it is available to them and discuss with their force.

What happens if I lose connectivity/Wi-Fi during my exam?

The exam platform will automatically save your responses every 15 seconds. Therefore, if you do experience issues during the exam, such as loss of connection, do not panic, your responses will not be lost. You will be able to return to the point in the exam where you lost connectivity and re-access the exam using your login information. The timer will be paused whilst you are disconnected and will re-start once you re-connect. You should be able to do this yourself without the need to contact anyone and we will provide guidance to follow on the day should you experience any difficulties.

Will the exams be timed?

Yes, the exams will still be timed.

How long will my exam last?

Whilst the method of how you will take the exam will be different this year, the timing of the exam will remain the same as in previous years.

Will I be able to take breaks during the exam?

No, the exam must be completed in one sitting. If you want to take a comfort break during the exam you can but you will not receive any additional time to do this.

Will the exams be in a multiple-choice question format?

Yes, the exams will still be in a multiple-choice question format.

How many questions will be in my exam?

Whilst the method of how you will take the exam will be different this year, the structure of the exam will remain the same as in previous years. This means your exam will contain the same number of questions as in previous years and will also include the same number of validation questions.

Can I move backwards and forwards in the exam to revisit questions?

Yes, you can move back and forth in the exam to revisit questions and change answers should you wish to. However, you should be aware that to move back and forth in the exam will involve navigating through each question separately. For example, if you are on the final question and wish to revisit question one, you will need to manually click back through all questions in the exam in turn. You may wish to consider how you will manage your time appropriately in the exam if you wish to revisit questions.

We recommended that you make a note of any question numbers that they may wish to return to at the end of the exam to assist this process. You must not copy the text of the question or make notes which could be considered trying to copy the content of the question.

At the end of the exam you will be asked to confirm that you have finished and submit your responses.

Will the pass mark for exams be the same as in previous years?

To ensure that the delivery of the exams have been fair we will be analysing the results of the exam and will compare this with previous years. If there is a significant variance in the pass rate of the exam, either higher or lower, the exam debrief panels will consider whether it is appropriate to change the exam pass mark to ensure assessment standards are in line with previous years.

Why have you said you might adjust the pass mark of the exam? How is this fair?

The delivery of exams online is an emergency response to COVID-19. As an interim contingency approach it will enable the service to continue promotion/progression during 2020 that is sustainable (where local/national situations can quickly change) and is fair and consistent to all candidates (all undertake the same process/are subject to the same arrangements).

In moving to online exam delivery we will need to make some changes to how we deliver exams this year to ensure they'll be appropriate for this new method of delivery.

The pass marks for exams were all developed through an evidence based standard setting approach based on the delivery method of the exams being paper and

pencil. We need to ensure that the pass marks are still appropriate because of how the delivery method of the exams is different this year and we can only do this by analysing the results post exam.

We have data about how candidates have performed in the exam in previous years, including the difficulty level of the exam and pass rates, as well as statistical data about how we expect candidates to perform in the exams this year as a result of the exam development process. Part of understanding whether the assessment standard and integrity of the exam has been affected through online delivery will involve looking at how candidates have performed this year with previous years and how we expect candidates to perform on the exam this year. This is something that we routinely look at after every exam and is scrutinised by the exam debrief panels before they are satisfied they can ratify the results as being valid and appropriate to release.

If we see a significant deviation in the success rate for exams, whether higher or lower, the exam debrief panel may need to consider adjusting the pass mark for an exam in order to maintain the assessment standard of the exam. It is important to point out that this could mean the cut score may need to be adjusted upwards, but also downwards if we find that the move to online exam delivery has made the exam harder for candidates than in previous years.

The ability to adjust the pass mark for exams is nothing new. The exam debrief panels have always had the ability to do this as part of their post exam considerations, in the same way we have previously adjusted marking to account for errors in questions in the exam.

The decision to adjust the pass mark will be made by the relevant exam debrief panels who will be in full possession of the facts and consist of a number of members drawn from the College and the service.

How long will it take to get my results?

We will advise you of the timeframes for receiving results in due course. Results will not be issued instantly, as we will need to analyse the results of the exam and have these ratified by the debrief panel. However, we do anticipate that we will be able to issue results to candidates in a shorter than usual timeframe.

Why can't I get my results instantly?

Results will not be issued instantly, as we will need to analyse the results of the exam and have these ratified by the debrief panel. However, we do anticipate that we will be able to issue results to candidates in a shorter than usual timeframe.

Will moving the exams to online delivery mean they can be held more frequently?

Moving exams online will mean that in the future we may be able to deliver exams in a different way, for example, more frequently and on demand rather than on specified dates. We will explore the feasibility of this over the coming months but additional examinations will not be available in 2020.

What reasonable adjustment or accommodation will you provide?

If you have any condition, temporary or otherwise, that might cause you to be disadvantaged during the exam – for example, pregnancy, injury or disability, including dyslexia – you may be entitled to an accommodation or reasonable adjustment. Any accommodation or reasonable adjustment will be based on the information provided to us in a relevant report produced by an appropriately qualified professional. Reasonable adjustments may include additional time, change of background colour, or other adjustments as recommended by a specialist.

For further information about how to apply for a reasonable adjustment or accommodation, please refer to: <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/Promotion/Documents/RA%20Policy%20Examinations.pdf>

If you had been granted a reasonable adjustment for the March 2020 Sergeants' Exam, we will contact you via your FEO to ensure that the adjustment or accommodation you had been granted is still suitable for an online exam.

We will be providing further information about the kind of reasonable adjustments we will be able to offer for online exams as soon as we can. In the meantime we would encourage you to apply for reasonable adjustment now if you think you might need it so we can ensure this is put in place for you.

Are there any changes to the exam syllabus I should be aware of?

The syllabus for the examinations are detailed in the relevant candidate handbooks, which can be found on the College of Policing website. Due to changes in the Police (Performance) Regulations, Police (Conduct) Regulations and Police (Complaints and Misconduct Regulations) in February 2020, candidates for the Sergeants' and Inspectors' Exams and the Direct Entry Superintendent Exam in 2020 will NOT be tested on the following two sections of the 2020 Blackstone's Police Manuals General Police Duties:

- Chapter 4.1 Complaints and Misconduct
- Chapter 4.2 Unsatisfactory Performance and Attendance.

Candidates will only be tested on the remaining sections of the manuals which form the syllabus for that exam. Candidates will not be tested on the new regulations which do not yet appear in the manuals. However, all candidates are advised that they should familiarise themselves with this legislation as part of their Continuous

Professional Development and preparation for promotion to the ranks of sergeant and inspector.

Will this be the new way of delivering exams or is it just a one off because of Coronavirus?

The focus of the College has been delivering alternatives for those candidates whose exams have been disrupted by COVID-19. However, it has been a long-term ambition of the College to deliver examinations online and moving them online this year will mean that we may be able to deliver exams in a different way in the future. We will explore the feasibility of this as part of evaluating the delivery of exams online in 2020.

How can I give feedback about taking my exam online?

As part of the monitoring and development of the online exams we would like to hear your views on your experience and we will invite you to take part in a candidate feedback questionnaire after your exam.

Will you be evaluating online exam delivery?

Yes, we will be evaluating the delivery of exams online.

About the College

We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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