

Online examinations candidate guide

For candidates doing any national online College exam including the NPPF Sergeants' and Inspectors' exams and the NIE.

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How to use this guide

Use the slide over page contents menu or scroll down to see the different sections in this handbook. A full downloadable version of the handbook can also be found in the related resources section at the bottom of this page.

Introduction

This guidance is to support you in preparing for your online exam this year. It will provide you with all the information you need before, during and after the exam and give you the best opportunity to understand the online platform before the exam day to limit your chances of experiencing any issues on the day. It is really important that you take the time to read and apply all the information in this document before taking the exam.

Why are the exams online this year?

The College has delivered national exams through an online platform from September 2020 to enable us to resume exam delivery which was paused due to COVID-19. Resuming exam delivery is crucial to ensuring forces can continue to promote supervisors and deliver frontline services. This approach for delivering exams will continue for 2021 for which all exams will be delivered online.

It is not anticipated that this approach will become the default methodology for exam delivery by the College. During 2021, the College will be reviewing exam delivery in order to determine a more long term solution for future years.

When will the exams be held?

Please refer to the relevant candidate handbook for the examination for specific exam dates and registration dates.

- [NPPF sergeants' and inspectors' exams](#)
- [National investigators' exam \(NIE\)](#)

What time will my exam begin?

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 by 20:00. If you have not done this, you may not be able to finish your exam.

What if I am unable to take the exam on the specified date?

We cannot provide alternative dates for candidates who are unable to sit their exam on the dates scheduled.

Preparing for your exam

Reading this candidate guide will help you know what to expect on the day and how to prepare effectively. Carefully following all the instructions in this guide will help to ensure you are as prepared as possible for taking your exam online. It is your responsibility to ensure you have read all the guidance and candidate handbook relevant for your exam ahead of taking the exam.

How can I make sure I have the latest information about my exam?

We will communicate regularly via force exam contacts who will pass all information on to their candidates. We will also ensure updates are available on the relevant exam pages on the College of Policing website and on our social media pages.

- [NPPF sergeants' and inspectors' exams](#)
- [National investigators' exam \(NIE\)](#)

We will not send information directly to candidates regarding the examinations so please ensure

you regularly check for updates via the above channels.

How should I revise for the online exam?

Revising for an online exam is no different to revising for an exam delivered by the traditional pencil and paper method. You still need to dedicate time to revise as the syllabus is large. The syllabus provides the material that has been deemed necessary for someone of that role to know and all aspects of the syllabus are potentially examinable. The syllabus is detailed in the candidate handbook relevant for your exam.

Everyone learns in different ways and you have to find the method that works best for you. There are several questions that are worth considering. Do you:

- learn best using visual methods such as graphs, diagrams, mind maps and colour coding?
- learn best using auditory methods such as reading aloud, discussing topics with others and recording notes to listen back to?
- like to make notes to read back?
- find applying the information you are learning to a practical scenario helpful? You could consider applying it to scenarios you or colleagues have dealt with at work, for example
- find using cue cards or mnemonics helpful to remember aspects of the law?
- find testing yourself on what you have read to be effective?
- find revising in small groups helpful?

Once you know your style, create a plan. A timetable which includes all the syllabus broken down into manageable chunks will help instil a sense of progression and help you to stay positive. Understand and embrace your strengths and development areas. You may need to spend longer on some areas that you are less familiar with. Start your revision early so you have enough time to dedicate to all the areas you need to.

Organise a suitable study environment, free from distractions, which will help you to concentrate and get the most from the time available. Consider what time of day is best for you to study. This is likely to be dependent on work and personal commitments. Everyone has busy lives so when you schedule time to revise, make sure you use that time effectively. You may need to find opportunities in your day to build in short revision sessions around other commitments. Small, regular revision sessions can be more useful than building in long days of revision if you use your

time effectively. Take short and frequent breaks during revision sessions. Don't forget to give consideration to your work-life balance. Maintaining a healthy mental balance will help get you through what can be a stressful time.

Can you provide me with a past exam paper to use for revision?

Since many of the questions in our exams are used multiple times, we don't provide past papers or revision questions as this would affect the integrity of the exams. Therefore, you will not find any College-approved past papers or questions to use for revision. There are companies who provide revision materials and practice questions for the examination, however these are not endorsed by the College of Policing and may differ in terms of content and difficulty level to the exam itself.

Registration

When can I register for the exam?

Specific registration periods for your exam can be found in the relevant Candidate Handbook. Registration dates will also be published on the College of Policing website and communicated via force exam contacts. It is your responsibility to ensure that you know when the registration period opens and closes and ensure you schedule the time within this period to register. Registration will not be extended beyond the closing date and late registrations will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

How can I register for the 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 joining instructions of how to access your exam and your results and feedback.

Your force exams contact will provide you with details of how to register, along with a link to access AIMS. It is a straightforward process and does not take long. You will be asked to enter

your personal and biographical details and confirm which exam you are registering for. It is very similar to the previous registration process, just online rather than completing a form. Your force will then be asked to confirm that you are eligible to sit the exam.

Check your details are correct when registering

When registering please check your email address, date of birth and national insurance number are all entered correctly. You will need to verify these in order to access your result and feedback report after the exam. Any errors in inputting these will result in a delay to receiving your result. If your email address is incorrect, you will not receive details of how to access your exam.

Please note that you will not receive an email confirming your registration is complete until approximately a week before the exam when you will receive a link to the familiarisation exercise. Please do not register more than once. If you have any concerns about your registration please contact your force exams contact.

You must not allow another person to gain access to AIMS or the examination platform using your login details, nor must you attempt to gain access via anyone else's login details. Any attempts to do so will be classed as a breach of the rules and reported to your Professional Standards Unit.

Can I use a personal email address when I register instead of a work email address?

Yes, you can enter your work or personal email address when you register for your exam on AIMS. You must ensure your email address is correct. It is your responsibility to check this. Providing an incorrectly spelt email address will result in you not receiving the link to access your exam.

I missed the registration closing date, can I still register?

No, we cannot extend registration because the closing dates for registration are close to the exam dates and we need to ensure all arrangements are made for each candidate. You must ensure you register before the closing date. Forces may set their registration closing date earlier than the dates published by the College to allow time for them to verify your application and allocate you to the correct exam in time. Please check with your force exam contact for your force-specific closing date and ensure you register ahead of this.

Reasonable adjustments and accommodations

How can I apply for a reasonable adjustment or accommodation?

Please contact your force exams contact as soon as possible if you require a reasonable adjustment or accommodation. You will need to provide supporting evidence with your request. Please note that registering your intention in AIMS to apply for a reasonable adjustment does not constitute applying. You must complete the request form and provide supporting evidence via your force exams contact ahead of the registration closing date.

For further information about how to apply for a reasonable adjustment or accommodation and details of supporting evidence, please refer to the [College's reasonable adjustments policy](#).

When should I apply for a reasonable adjustment or accommodation?

As soon as possible. You do not need to wait for registration for your exam to open. The sooner you can provide us with details and supporting evidence of what you need for the exam, the sooner we can process your request and ensure the adjustments you require can be put in place for you.

The closing date for applying for a reasonable adjustment or accommodation is the closing date for registration for your particular exam. Any requests submitted after this date cannot be guaranteed to be processed and be put in place for the exam. Please refer to the relevant candidate handbook for further information.

Online exam platform

Which online platform will be used to deliver the exams?

We will continue to deliver the exams through the same platform used in 2020, which is owned by 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. The exam platform will be accessed via a URL which will be sent to you ahead of the exam. You will be sent a link to familiarise yourself with the exam platform a week before the exam.

What device will I need to take my exam on?

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 or small tablet because a larger screen will offer you the best chance of viewing your exam in its entirety without having to scroll. Taking the exam on a larger screen will also show all functionality of the platform which smaller screen may not allow. The stability of the exam platform may also not be consistent on a mobile phone.

Using a force laptop means accessing the exam through your force VPN and you may be restricted by force bandwidth irrespective of how fast your home internet connection is. If this is likely to be an issue, please consider using a personal device to take the exam instead of a work laptop. If you experience local or force network connections, we will be unable to assist. Should you have any queries about force devices, we recommend speaking to someone in your force IT department.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have a suitable electronic device to access your exam on. If you do not have access to a personal or work device that you can use, we recommend speaking to your force exam contact to check if your force could provide you with a suitable device to use for your exam. It is not a requirement for forces to do this so will be a decision for individual forces to make. If you are using a force device, please ensure that the URL has been approved by your force and your device will not block any of the exam content (please be aware that some parts of the syllabus by their nature may be restricted words on some networks). It is your responsibility to ensure this is in place before the exam and that you have tested your device sufficiently before the exam. The College of Policing is unable to supply candidates with suitable devices for their exam.

The URL for the online platform will be provided to you ahead of the exam.

Which browsers are supported by the platform?

You 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.

Ensure you upgrade your browser to the latest version before the exam.

Can I check my browser is compatible with the exam platform?

It is very important that you schedule time to check your device and browser 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 test your device compatibility with the exams platform. You can check your device compatibility as many times as you like on as many devices as you like. 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.

You will also be sent a separate link to allow you to familiarise yourself with the exam platform. This is separate to testing your device compatibility and you can only access this exercise once. It will be available to look at until the day before the exam.

Exam venue

Where will I take my exam?

The online delivery of exams will enable you to take your exam in a convenient place, without the need to sit the exam at a physical exam centre alongside other candidates. You can choose where to take your exam so it is suitable and convenient for you. This could include in your own home or at a venue provided by your force if they choose to provide one for you.

Can I take the exam abroad?

Due to restrictions on firewalls and browsers, as well as the stability of internet connections, we cannot guarantee that candidates will be able to take the exam outside of the United Kingdom. Currently serving officers on deployment in another country who are supported by their force or organisation to take the exam, should contact their force exams contact. The College cannot provide support to officers who wish to take the exams abroad while on holiday.

Will my exam be supervised?

You will not be supervised while you take your exam. 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. There are a number of mechanisms built into the exam to prevent cheating. Any candidate who is suspected of cheating or disclosing the content of the exam in any form will be investigated and could have their exam results 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. Some forces may wish to provide a testing environment for candidates and your force will contact you directly if they choose to do this.

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

Some forces may wish to provide a socially distanced venue for their candidates. While this is not something the College requires, we will support forces to do this by offering guidance on providing a suitable testing environment. If your force decides to provide a venue for you to sit your exam at, your force 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 can. 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 their concerns with their force. Any concerns will be for the force and candidate to resolve directly.

How can I create a suitable exam environment for myself?

The move to online delivery means that you will be responsible for providing a suitable environment for yourself to take your exam. As such, the College of Policing will not, under any circumstances, accept appeals of unscheduled incidents relating to an unsuitable testing environment. This includes sitting the exam in a force-provided venue. Any concerns regarding the suitability of the testing environment of a force-provided venue should be directed to your force. The College will not be able to consider these appeals. Therefore, it is vital that you take the time to follow this guidance and ensure you have a suitable testing environment for the exam.

You will need to plan this in advance and ensure you have considered the following:

Venue

For many candidates, their home may be a suitable venue. For others, this may not be a suitable environment if you are likely to be disturbed or interrupted during the exam. If this is the case you may wish to consider speaking to your force to see if you could sit in a quiet room in force or consider a different venue from your own home. You must take the exam in one sitting and you will not be able to stop or pause the exam once started so choosing a distraction-free environment is essential. Also ensure you adhere to current government guidelines on social distancing.

Noise

The room that you choose to take the exam in should be free from distractions for the duration of the exam. Consider how you can ensure you won't be disturbed. This may involve putting a sign on the door if in a place accessed by others, wearing earplugs and considering the best time of day for you to take the exam. You should take your exam in a room on your own, unless you are sitting with other candidates in a venue organised by your force. You may also consider checking if there will be any likely disturbances to the exam, eg, fire alarm tests, building works nearby, etc.

Lighting

Ensure the room that you will take your exam in has suitable lighting to meet your needs. If you need to arrange for additional lighting, arrange this prior to the exam. You may also need to

consider your position in the room to avoid glare and reflections on your screen.

Temperature

Ensure the temperature of the room will be suitable for your needs. If this is outside of your control, you may need to consider dressing appropriately for the environment so this does not distract you. Heat and humidity should be maintained at levels which prevent discomfort and problems with dry/sore eyes.

Internet Connection

Make sure you have a strong internet connection. We recommend connecting via an Ethernet cable to a broadband router wherever possible. Ensure you test your device prior to the exam. If your connection drops out during the exam, the system will save your answers until that point. You will then need to sign back into the exam using your login details. The timer will pause and will restart where you were with the remaining time so you will not lose time if you lose connection or you experience buffering. However, to save undue stress during the exam, take steps beforehand to ensure this is unlikely to happen. We will provide you with step-by-step instructions of what to do if your connection fails before your exam. If you do not have a strong internet connection and it fails during the exam, the College will not be able to assist with this so it is important to ensure your connection is strong and tested before the exam.

Browser

Ensure your chosen internet browser on your device is compatible with the exam platform. Ensure you have the latest version of your chosen internet browser installed..

Device

Ensure you have access to a suitable electronic device to take the exam on (see Section 5.2). Put the device on 'do not disturb' mode so that you are not distracted during the exam. Limiting access to other applications on the device will also help to ensure your connection remains stable during the exam and you will be less likely to face problems with connectivity during the exam.

Work station

We strongly recommend taking health and safety precautions to ensure you have a suitable work

station for the exam where possible. For example, setting your work station up to prevent poor posture, using a separate keyboard and mouse if possible, ensuring you have sufficient space to change posture as required, etc.

Consider using a suitable chair which allows you to adjust the height and back support to meet your needs and a desk which will allow you to sit comfortably for the duration of the exam. If you need to adjust your posture during the exam, you may want to consider a work station which allows you to stand and sit as required. If you do not have a suitable chair or desk to meet your individual needs for the exam, please speak to your force exam contact to see if they can assist.

Display screen

Ensure you have a display screen which is large enough for you to see the exam clearly (we do not recommend using a mobile phone). A display screen which has adjustable brightness and contrast and can be tilted to meet your needs will help you remain comfortable during the exam.

Food and drink

You can consume food and drinks of your choice during your exam to meet your personal needs. If you are taking the exam at a shared venue provided by your force, please be mindful to bring food and drinks which will not disturb or distract others. Take care not to spill drinks or food onto your device, though, as it may cause it to malfunction.

Personal requirements

If you have any personal requirements you will need during the exam, ensure you have these before the exam starts. This may include reading glasses, medication, easy access to a toilet, etc.

Exam format

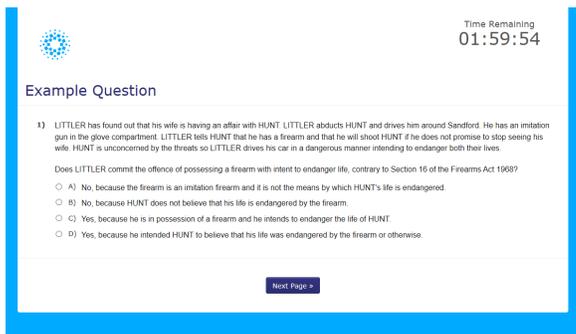
Will the questions be multiple choice?

Yes, the questions will still be multiple choice application questions. An example question is shown in section 7.2 below which shows the format of questions. Please note this question is provided as an example and not as a practice question. It has therefore not received recent legal review and the correct answer is not provided.

How will the exam be presented?

You will be presented with one question per page. The background screen will be white and the questions will be presented in Arial font, size 12 as standard. You will need to ensure you are using a large enough screen to be able to see the questions properly, otherwise font size will be affected. Using a mobile phone or tablet to take your exam will result in a different candidate experience. You should be able to use the standard zoom features on your device to make the question size bigger or smaller to suit your preference, depending on your device.

The screenshot below shows you how the questions will be presented. On a regular sized screen, questions will appear in Arial font, size 12.



Can I change the font and size within the exam?

The font and size will be set as standard as described above for all candidates and you cannot change this. You should be able to use the standard zoom features on your device to make the question size bigger or smaller to suit your preference, depending on your device.

Can I change the background colour of the exam?

No, the platform does not allow for the background colour to be changed. The background colour will be white with black writing for all exams, with a blue border (as shown in the example above). If you wish to change the background colour, you can alter the colour or brightness settings on your own device or use a coloured screen overlay of your own providing. You must ensure you use a specific screen overlay which is suitable for use on an electronic device. We advise you check this when you access the familiarisation exercise before your exam to ensure it is

appropriate for your needs.

How many questions will be in the exam?

While 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. Please refer to the relevant Candidate Handbook for specific details for your exam.

Will the exam be timed?

The standard time allowance for the exams will remain the same as previous years. Please refer to the relevant Candidate Handbook for specific details for your exam.

Once you click to start the exam, the timer will begin and cannot be paused. Therefore, please ensure you are in a suitable place and ready to take the exam before you press the start button. Any attempts to pause the timer are logged on the system and will be recorded as unusual activity which will be reviewed after the examination and reported to the debrief panel if applicable.

How can I manage my time in the exam?

There will be a countdown clock in the top right-hand corner of your screen which will be visible for the entire exam to allow you to manage your time in the exam (as shown in the example screenshot in section 7.2). This cannot be removed, so if you are likely to find this distracting you may want to consider covering this corner of your screen so it is only visible when you choose it to be. Please note for mobile devices, the position of the clock on screen may vary.

It is recommended that you divide your time up in the exam to fully utilise the time available to you. You will need to read each question carefully and work quickly and accurately to ensure you have time to answer all questions. You may wish to plan your time before your exam begins.

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. There is not an option in the platform to navigate straight to one question. 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. You will also not be able to flag questions during the exam so you can return to them directly at the end of the exam.

We recommend that you make a note of any question numbers that you 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.

If you do move back and forth in the exam please take care to ensure you do not change your previous answers if you do not wish to. You can avoid this by ensuring you are pressing the next/previous page buttons. Using a large screen will assist with this process.

At the end of the exam you will be asked to confirm that you have finished and submit your responses. You will not get a confirmation from the platform that your responses have been received. If you run out of time before you have completed your exam the responses you have given up to that point will be automatically submitted, but you will not get a confirmation from the exam platform. You do not need to contact the College or your force exams contact to check that your answers have been received- they are automatically saved and submitted.

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. You will not be able to pause or restart the exam once you begin and nor should you attempt to. Any attempts to pause the timer are logged on the system and will be recorded as unusual activity which will be reviewed after the examination and reported to the debrief panel, if applicable. Attempting to pause the clock is a breach of examination rules and could mean your result is nullified. If you need a break for any reason, the time will continue just as it would if you were sitting the exam under previous conditions at a physical exam venue, unless you have an agreed reasonable adjustment that allows scheduled breaks to be taken during the exam.

Maintaining the integrity of policing exams

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 and to not try to gain an unfair advantage in the exam by any means. The design of the exams and mechanisms that we have introduced into the delivery of the exam mean that attempts to cheat are likely to be ineffective and are easy to identify due to the way that the system records activity in the platform. Any candidate who is suspected of cheating or disclosing the content of the exam in any way will be investigated and could have their exam results 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.

Can I look up answers during the exam or refer to reference materials?

We expect candidates to take the exam in the same way as they would in an invigilated environment without accessing reference materials. However, we appreciate that the move away from on-site invigilation for these exams means candidates may decide to access reference materials 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 is such that taking the approach of referring to reference materials 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 you 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 has the legal knowledge needed to perform successfully in the next rank/role. 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/role.

However, to ensure fairness for all, if you choose to access reference materials, it will not be reported to Professional Standards or classed as a means of cheating as it is unlikely to provide you with any advantage. However, you are strongly discouraged from doing this as it is will not be an effective way to pass the exam. There is no 'ban' on taking reference materials into the exam

regardless of where it is sat.

Attempting to pause the clock is a breach of examination rules and could mean your result is nullified. Any attempts to pause the timer are logged on the system and will be recorded as unusual activity which will be reviewed after the examination and reported to the debrief panel, if applicable.

Can I make notes on blank paper during the exam?

You may use blank paper to make notes in the exam if you wish. If you wish to return to a question later, it is recommended that you note the question number to make it easier to return to as you will have to navigate through all questions if you wish to return to an earlier one. You are not allowed to copy a question onto blank paper under any circumstances. Copying a question will be considered a breach of examination rules and reported to your professional standards unit.

What is to stop candidates taking the exam together and helping each other?

As police officers, we would expect all candidates to act with integrity and in line with the Code of Ethics and complete the exam on their own, without helping, or accepting help from, others. All candidates will receive the questions and answer options in a randomised order. Therefore, question number 1 with correct answer A in your exam may be question 47 with correct answer B in someone else's exam. Therefore, attempting to gain an unfair advantage by sharing answers and completing the exam as a group is likely to be highly counterproductive and unhelpful, as well as taking up valuable time in the exam.

Can I keep copies of the questions for my own use or to share with others?

No, making and/or keeping copies of the questions in any format is prohibited. The questions remain the intellectual property of the College of Policing and we reserve the right to reuse questions. If people keep and share copies of questions it affects the future integrity of exams. Candidates can take the exam within a 12-hour window on the exam day. If the exam content is shared before a candidate has chance to take the exam, this could lead to them having an unfair advantage and affect the integrity of the exam. It is therefore paramount that you do not discuss

exam content with anyone after the exam, including comments on social media, as this is likely to provide others with an unfair advantage.

Candidates must not take screenshots of questions for any reasons, including to send to the College to highlight a query. Any copying of questions for any reason is considered a breach of the rules and will be reported to the debrief panel.

Discussing the content of questions in any form, including on social media platforms, is prohibited and presents a huge personal risk for that candidate and their future career. Any candidate who is suspected of disclosing the content of the exam in any way will be investigated and could have their exam results nullified and/or be banned from entering the exam in future. Candidates suspected of keeping or sharing the content of the exam will also be referred to their force's Professional Standards Unit. This includes entering into discussions after the exam has finished on social media in public or private forums.

Exam day

How will I access my exam?

A few days before your exam, you will receive details of the URL to access the exam platform on the day of the exam and information about how to log into the exam. If you have not received this link 24 hours prior to your exam date, please contact your force exams contact. You will need to ensure you can access this email on the day of the exam or make a note of the URL. You will have your own unique identifier to access the exam and must not share this with anyone else or use anyone else's unique identifier to access the exam. You should copy and paste your unique identifier from the email you will receive into the exam platform to ensure it is accurate. An incorrect username entered will mean that your results will not be assigned to you. You must ensure you remember your login details as the College of Policing will be unable to provide this on the day to anyone who does not have it. You will press start to read the privacy statement and candidate declaration. When you have agreed to this, your exam will begin and the time for the exam will start so no time will be lost for reading the candidate declaration. The exam will appear in a separate pop up window.

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.

[Read more about technical help on exam day.](#)

Testing your device in advance

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. You should also complete the familiarisation exercise which will be sent to you a week before the exam. This will allow you the opportunity to familiarise yourself with the platform and how it works before the exam. Because there will be a high volume of candidates taking their exam online, we cannot guarantee to be able to provide direct one-to-one support during the exam or provide 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.

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

The exam platform will automatically save your responses after each question. Therefore, if you do experience issues during the exam, such as loss of connection, do not panic, your responses will not be lost. This is also the case if you encounter buffering whilst you take your exam. 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 pause if you lose connection and will start again with the time remaining when you have re-accessed the exam. 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.

If you follow all the instructions in this document before the exam, you will limit your chances of experiencing difficulties on the day. You should avoid closing or 'refreshing' your browser during the exam as you may lose time and this may affect your experience. You should also close all other browsers and applications on your device to ensure connectivity isn't affected.

What if I accidentally submit my responses before I have finished the exam?

You can only submit all responses when you have completed all questions in the exam and you will be prompted to confirm that you wish to do this. Once you have completed the exam, you cannot re-access the questions. If your time runs out before you complete the questions, your responses will be automatically saved when the system closes. You will not receive a confirmation that your responses have been submitted.

Results and feedback

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

To ensure that the delivery of the exams has 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 panel 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?

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 online 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 after the exam.

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 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. 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 panel who will be in full possession of the facts and consists of a number of members drawn from the College and the service.

How long will it take to get my results?

Results will be available within two to three weeks after the exam. You will receive an email when results are available with a link to access your result and feedback report. You will need to follow this link and verify your email address, date of birth and national insurance number. Please ensure these are all entered correctly when you initially register as any errors will lead to a delay in being able to access your results. You will not be sent your feedback report directly as in previous years. Force exams contacts will be able to access a pass/fail list of their officers' results from the registration platform too.

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. The pass mark also needs to be determined as described above.

Unscheduled incidents

How do I put in an appeal of unscheduled incidents?

Full details are provided in the relevant candidate handbook for each exam. The College will **not** accept appeals of unscheduled incidents regarding the testing environment as detailed in Section 6.6. The College is unable to assist with local or force connection issues so please ensure you

follow the advice in this document to reduce your chances of experiencing any issues. Any appeals must reach the College within seven days of the exam and be countersigned by your line manager. We will not accept appeals after this time under any circumstances.

How do I raise a query about a question in the exam?

You should contact your force exams contact with details of your query. They will then submit directly to the College, who will review the question and take legal advice if needed. Appropriate action will then be taken if required. You must not copy a question from the exam to send to us. Taking a copy of a question in any format for any reason is a breach of exam rules as described in Section 8.5. We will be able to locate a question from a brief description that you provide rather than the actual question.

You must not share content of the question with others or encourage debate on social media platforms. This will be considered a breach of the examination rules as described in Section 8.4.

Providing feedback

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. Any feedback you can provide will be valuable. However, please note that we are not able to treat any feedback you provide in this questionnaire as a formal appeal of unscheduled incidents. You should therefore not expect a response to issues raised through this channel.

Will you be evaluating online exam delivery?

Yes, we will be evaluating the delivery of exams online and using this to inform our decisions about the delivery of the exams going forward to inform our long term delivery plan.

Downloadable resources

A pdf version of this guide is available. It includes a printable checklist of key points to remember.

- [Online examination guide 2021 \(pdf\) 566.76 KB](#)

Tags

Leadership development