



Computer-based exam overview webinar: questions and answers

What's the best way to plan for a computer-based exam?

Practice! Use all of the resources we provide at [icaew.com/cbe](https://www.icaew.com/cbe). These include webinars, online/offline question banks, the computer-based exam guide, illustrative exam answers, exam top tips, webinars and more. Access the question banks within the exam resources area of our website, just select the level and exam you are studying. You can also find more exam resources at [icaew.com/examresources](https://www.icaew.com/examresources)

Where can we find practice exam software for Advanced Level exams?

You can find the software at [icaew.com/cbe](https://www.icaew.com/cbe) or within the [Advanced Level exam resources](#) web area, simply select the exam you are studying.

Can I sit the exam by hand rather than by computer?

No. Once an exam has moved over to computer, it will no longer be sat using paper.

Will everyone's exam start at slightly different times due to when they press start?

Yes, slightly. Start times will not vary by more than five minutes as this is due to when student's enter in their pin from the invigilator and click on 'Start exam'.

Are we allowed to bring in a small digital desk clock (the basic type that were allowed in the paper-based exams)? If I have been awarded extra time, will this automatically appear?

No. The software has a built in clock that will count down during your exam and will display the time remaining. A warning will pop up on screen when there is five minutes remaining. If you have been awarded additional time due to access arrangements, the timer will automatically show the time you have been allocated.

Can you take an analogue watch into the exam?

No. Please read the [Instructions to Candidates](#) before your exam. It will provide you with everything you need to know ahead of your sitting, including important processes and procedures.

Will the timer count up or down?

The timer will count down during your exam and will display the time remaining. A warning will pop up on screen when there is five (5) minutes remaining.

Are we allowed to have a printed exam paper to highlight/annotate?

The software allows you to highlight and make annotations on questions. You will be provided with paper and a pen to make notes on, however these will be collected at the end of your exam and will not marked. You will be expected to show all workings as part of your response on screen.

What happens if I run out of lines in the software, does one question have to be answered in 200 rows?

The software is set up to include 180 rows. This allows you to add in an additional 20 at your convenience. After numerous student testing sessions, and multiple meetings with examiners, ICAEW has determined that 200 rows is sufficient space to answer your exam requirements.

Is it possible to add multiple rows?

Yes. You can add multiple rows or columns within the software by selecting the 'Layout' button on the toolbar.

Are decimal places automatically rounded?

Yes, with the exception of the Professional Level Financial Management exam which rounds to two decimal places.

Do you have to change the decimal places for one cell or can you highlight multiple cells to do this?

The software allows for highlighting multiple cells and changing their decimal places using the decimal place buttons located in the toolbar.

Can I use a comma instead of using the decimal place button?

No.

It appears that if you leave space between sentences by using the enter button it removes those spaces when being exported. Please can you advise if we can put a dot between the lines to spread them out?

If you're using the word processing row and you leave spaces between paragraphs in the software, when you submit your responses in the live exam, your answers will appear exactly as you intended them to. When you export your responses using the practice software, it removes the extra paragraph breaks allowing you to export to a PDF document. Keep in mind the export button is not available during your live exam.

When using the software to complete a mock exam I merged a row and entered a long answer into one cell and left spaces within each paragraph. However, when I submitted this for marking the spaces between my answers disappeared. Will this happen in the real exam?

No spacing is removed while using the software during a live exam. This is a function that has been added when you export your answers using the practise software only.

Is the exhibit button separate to the question tab?

Yes. Descriptions of this can be found within the [computer-based exam guide](#).

How can we see the exhibit and question response side-by-side and is there space for this and will we need to have excessive scrolling?

In the Advanced Level exams, the questions and exhibits are split out into two buttons. You are able to open both at the same time. You can view a webinar on how to move this side-by-side at [icaew.com/cbe](https://www.icaew.com/cbe)

Will my exam centre's keyboard have shortcuts functions for currency, if not what should I use?

Depending on which country you sit the exam, you may not have all the currency symbols on your keyboard. Sensible abbreviations should be used instead, for example, P or GBP for £, D or USD for \$, E or EUR for €.

Is there spell check?

There is no spelling check function, so do a check of your spelling and grammar.

How do you wrap sentences?

To enter in a narrative response you select anywhere in column A. An arrow will pop up and after you select the arrow, a word processing row will appear allowing your text to wrap.

Can we wrap text after we have typed in the text?

No, you'll need to create a word processing row first.

What are the differences between the practice software and the actual exam?

The practice software allows for exporting of responses allowing you to save these as PDFs. Please note that this function is only available within the practice exam software. When you complete a live exam, your responses will automatically be saved throughout the exam and uploaded onto our marking system when you finish.

What's the best resolution to have the screen on to see everything side-by-side?

All of our exam centres have a minimum screen resolution they need to adhere to. This allows your response area and question to be seen side-by-side.

Is the length and time of the exam the same now it is on computer?

Yes.

Is there 15 minutes time available for reading and highlighting the question?

No. The length of the exam has not changed.

Can we drag formula like we go in excel?

No. Current functionality does not allow for formula dragging.

When answering the exam questions do you have to make all columns A-K fit the screen?

No, you can increase or decrease the size of the rows and columns as long as your response is visible.

If I have to write one thousand in numbers shall I write it with a comma ie, 1,000?

You can write your answer with a comma or without. Both answers are acceptable.

Can we change colour or make a number bold to make it stand out for my purposes?

Yes.

When wrapping the text will this automatically ensure that all text will be viable to the marker?

Yes.

Are there any keyboard shortcut functions we can use?

The software allows for cut, copy, and paste. You can find more information on this in the [computer-based exam guide](#).

Can you change the size of the response area where you type the answer? Or only the questions?

Yes, you can increase or decrease the row and column height and width.

Please can you confirm only four highlighters are available and no underlining function is available when viewing the exhibits?

Yes.

When you mention we should make sure it's visible, if we have already expanded the columns won't other columns be off the screen?

No. If you increase the size of any column or row, you work in the other rows and columns are still visible.

What happens if I insert formula and it becomes void when we insert cells?

You need to update your formula when inserting a new row or column.

Can you copy and paste from exam paper to writing pad?

Yes.

Is it okay to write all the text including different paragraphs in one text bar?

Yes.

Does the marker see exactly what is on our screen, ie, a screenshot or do they get the export view that we practice with?

Your answers will be presented to the examiner exactly as they appear on screen.

Do you have one response area for each question is there a response area for each sub part?

There is a response area for each question including all subparts of that question.

Can you highlight the exhibits as well as the question?

Yes.

For the two column approach would you recommend merging the cells into two columns?

Not necessarily as you won't be able to wrap your text. Have a look at how examiners are asking you to lay out your answers in the sample answers within the [exam resources web area](#).

Does the spreadsheet support all calculations including some of the complex ones?

The software supports basic functionality, so it's important to show all your workings.

What if we delete a column with information inside by accident? Can we undo this?

Yes. The undo button allows the last five (5) actions to be undone.

Is there a re-do button?

No, there is not currently a re-do button.

How can we move from one question to the next?

You can move to the next question by using the 'Next' button on the bottom right hand corner or by manually selecting the question on the left hand side.

Is there an exhibit button in the practice question bank software?

Yes, and also in our question bank.

What can we do about noise?

If you are easily distracted by noise, you can use earplugs to help you concentrate in the exam room.

Would you use one word processing row per paragraph? As gaps are not included even if inserted in one box. Would this impact marks for presentation?

You can use one word processing row for several paragraphs, or one word processing row for each paragraph. If you insert a paragraph into a word processing row, your answer will be presented to the examiner exactly as you see it on screen.

Can we practice the highlight function with the online practice software?

Yes, you can access the software within our [exam resources web area](#).

How do you download the offline practice software?

Instructions on how to download the offline software can be found within our [exam resources web area](#).

Can you insert additional text part way through an expanded paragraph cell after clicking off the cell?

You need to double click into a cell to add additional text.

If you copy data from the question and paste it in to the answer area, will it paste all the copied data into the one cell or will it spread it out accordingly?

It will paste it all into one cell.

What happens if my system crashes when I sit an exam, will it automatically save?

The exam will be delivered via a secure, locked-down application that is resilient to internet connectivity problems. In the unlikely event that you encounter any technical difficulties, the invigilator will be able to provide support. Your exam will automatically save and you will be able to pick up where you left off by re-entering your keycode. You must make the invigilator aware as soon as possible, as you will be required to complete an invigilator report.

Contact us

If you have a question not listed here, please get in touch. Contact our student support team on +44 (0)1908 248 250, email us or speak to an adviser by clicking on the live web chat box on this page. You can also post your question on the ICAEW student community at [icaew.com/studentcommunity](https://www.icaew.com/studentcommunity)