

FICM OSCE and SOE Remote Examinations – FAQs

This document applies to the October 2021 sitting of the FICM OSCE and SOE Examinations. It will be updated from time to time to ensure that any further questions are disseminated to all candidates sitting these tests.

1. What will my exams be like?

We hope to replicate the exam experience as best as possible, using Zoom video conferencing software. In the same manner as you would in a face-to-face version of the exam, you will move from one cubicle to the next for both the OSCE and the SOE. You will meet the same number of examiners and you will be asked the same range of questions, that will test you on the same breadth of curriculum topics. Candidates can sit the test online at a place of their choosing, such as their home or workplace, using their own hardware. The exam is orchestrated by Faculty invigilators.

2. Why is the FICM moving to online examinations?

Restrictions on social gathering, the possibility of localised lockdowns and further waves of COVID-19, may prevent the Faculty running face-to-face exams for some time. Online invigilation avoids further cancellations and gives us the option to deliver the FICM exams without a change to format.

3. What equipment do I need to sit the exams in this format? 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.
- Zoom video conferencing software installed on your device.

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 exam?

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.

5. Can I try the software before the test day?

We strongly recommend that you download Zoom in plenty of time before your exam and familiarise yourself with the format. Zoom is free to download and run. Once you have downloaded the Zoom application, you can call friends, family or colleagues and check that you know the layout of the application and that your screen resolution is adequate. There will also be example questions on the Faculty exam pages, where you be able to view artefacts and check that your screen displays them properly.

For those unfamiliar with Zoom, there are tutorials online at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-video-tutorials>

6. What happens on the test day?

- When you join the Zoom meeting and before the start of the exam, the invigilator will ask you to hold your ID up for checking.
- 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.
- You will be asked to take your mobile phone and put it in another room for the duration of the exam module.
- It is helpful if your background is neutral and uncluttered.
- You will be asked to sit far enough away from the screen so that your hands can be seen. This will likely only be a few feet, but if it is further then you will be permitted to come closer to review artefacts before returning to the previous distance.
- Before the exam begins you will be transferred to a waiting room, before then being transferred to the first exam station. After your first station has finished you will be transferred to a waiting area, before being transferred to your next station.

7. Can I sit the exam on a day of my choice?

Due to the challenges of running the examinations in this new format, there is limited ability to accommodate date and time requests by candidates. We ask for your understanding on this matter.

8. Do I still need to take the OSCE and SOE in the same sitting?

Yes, if this is your first attempt and/or you have not already passed one component, then you must take both the OSCE and the SOE in the same sitting. Details of timings will be included in your admission notice.

9. Can I make notes during the exams?

During the SOE exam, you may make notes on one piece of paper to aid you when answering the question. **You must not transcribe the questions verbatim, this is an infringement of the regulations and grounds for disqualification. All notes must be destroyed after the end of the exam.**

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

It will not be possible to admit candidates who are late as running an exam in this manner relies on precision. It is also highly unlikely that we would be able to schedule you for another time during the exam week. You would have to apply for the following sitting and your exam fee will not be transferred. If you are late on the day or unable to sit the exam for any reason, please contact the examinations department (exams@rcoa.ac.uk / 020 7092 1520) to explain the reason and we will be able to offer advice and support.

11. When will I get my results?

The process by which the exam is marked, standard checked and for the results to be double checked and published, will be longer and subject to enhanced scrutiny. Therefore the publishing of results will take longer. Results for the October 2021 exam are expected to be released on 4 November 2021.

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

In the event that you fail an exam and it is your first sitting of an exam in the new online format, that attempt will not count towards your total 6 attempts. This change only applies for academic year 2020-2021.

13. Do I have to sit the exam online?

This sitting of the examination is exclusively online, with no option to be examined in person. It is the hope that the FICM will run face-to-face examinations as soon as it is safe, permitted and practical to do so. There is no certainty as to when this will be possible. It is therefore a candidate's individual choice to sit the available online exam, or postpone with the expectation to sit the exam when we return to face-to-face. We recommend speaking to your colleagues for support and guidance around this. Or contact the [Faculty](#) directly.

14. 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.

15. 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. You should also look to your workplace for support with finding a suitable location.

16. How will you prevent candidates cheating? Will it be as fair as face to face exam?

Candidate behaviour is closely monitored during the exam by the invigilation team and examiners.

The waiting areas will be monitored by observers from the exams team, or examiner cohort. Examiners will request that candidates use the 'share screen' function on Zoom to ensure that candidates are not accessing materials during the exam.

Examiners may request to see a candidate's environment at any point during the exam if they suspect misconduct.

An invigilator or examiner will notify the Faculty of any issues that arise during the exam, for example, candidate behaviour that breaks the rules of the exam.

The exam is also recorded so it can be reviewed after the exam. Though this is primarily to audit the examiners and ensure the exam is carried out properly, any concerning candidate behaviour will be noted and investigated. The Faculty's [Misconduct Policy](#) will apply.

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

As long as your computer fits the description above and your internet service meets the standards mentioned above, you should be able to sit the exam. Our advice is to try Zoom numerous times before your exam day to make sure it works well. If you know your internet speed isn't great, then please look at other location options such as your workplace.

18. What happens if there is a power cut?

Power outages are considered very low risk in the UK. If this happens then it will be treated as extenuating circumstances, subject to individual circumstances, you may be offered another exam slot during the same sitting if at all possible. If not, then your fee would be refunded or transferred to the following sitting.

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

For any issues that arise on the exam day, before the exam has started there will be a dedicated telephone number and team member to contact. This information will be made available closer to the exam date.

If you have technical issues during the exam, remain in front of your screen and someone from the exam team will contact you.

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

Most reasonable adjustments can be catered for. The normal process applies: 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.

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