

Rules for the conduct of Pearson external assessments multiple-choice tests



Centre guide

Pearson written (multiple-choice) tests may be conducted only by registered Examination Centres. To become a registered Examination Centre it is necessary to complete a Centre Application Form and return it to Pearson.

The approved Examination Centre will be the Centre (ie location) with overall responsibility for the conduct of multiple-choice tests.

Premises

The Centre must ensure that it has sufficient space to accommodate the proposed number of candidates. If sufficient space is not available on the premises, the Centre must provide evidence that:

- it has access to premises which will accommodate the required number of candidates
- it has made arrangements with an approved Centre in the locality.

In deciding whether there is sufficient space on the premises, Centres must bear in mind the following:

- 1 At least 1 Supervisor must be present in each room throughout the test. Where there are more than 25 candidates, 1 additional Supervisor will normally be required for every additional 25 candidates. In the case of an L or T shaped room, at least 2 Supervisors must be present, even though the number of candidates may be less than 25.
- 2 In seating candidates, Centres must ensure that there is 1 metre clear space between each candidate.
- 3 Centres must keep strictly to the schedule of dates and times set by Pearson for the multiple choice tests or, in the case of on-demand tests the date stated by the Centre for the conduct of the test.

External assessment on employer premises and other locations

The facility to offer multiple-choice tests on employer premises or other locations will be granted where it can be shown that:

- 1 the candidates are in a remote or unusual location
- 2 the Centre has insufficient space to accommodate the number of candidates
- 3 exceptional circumstances eg a candidate who is hospitalised
- 4 particular assessment requirements apply.

Applications for Examination Centre approval must clearly state the location(s) at which multiple-choice tests will be conducted where these are different from the address given on the application form.

Centres may need to change their arrangements relating to the use of other premises from time to time; in this case request must be made to Pearson. Other locations must not be used without prior approval.

In the case of exceptional circumstances, the Centre must contact the Compliance Unit at Pearson for further guidance, email compliance@pearson.com

For Particular Assessment Requirements, the Centre must apply in writing to the Compliance Unit at Pearson, who will discuss the situation further.

It is expected that such situations will be the exception rather than the rule because of the extra burden that would be placed on Centre staff.

Supervisors

Centres must ensure that for each 25 candidates, there is a designated team of 3 suitably qualified and responsible Supervisors. This ensures:

- smooth running of the multiple-choice tests
- that quality assurance of the supervision may take place
- that regular checks can be made on the room in which the tests are being conducted.

In the event of an emergency (eg fire/bomb alert) the candidates should be escorted outside and should not be allowed to communicate with each other. Supervisors should keep note of the time that elapses so that when candidates are allowed back inside the room, they can be given the extra time. Should the emergency be longer than approximately 30 minutes, the assessment session should be cancelled and advice sought from the Compliance Unit at Pearson.

Any member of staff who has trained or assessed a candidate should not supervise the multiple-choice test of that candidate. No member of a candidate's family may act as a Supervisor.

Security of assessment materials

When question papers are received, they should be locked away, unopened, until the date of the test. Only the key holders designated at the time of approval should have access to the safe.

Supervision practice prior to the start of the external assessment

At least 2 members of the appointed supervision team should be present during the hours of the multiple-choice tests. Thirty minutes before the start of the test, 1 Supervisor will ensure that:

- the room is properly arranged, ie seats at least 1 metre apart, at a reasonable temperature, and that there is a clock visible to all candidates
- there is a chalkboard or flipchart on which the date and any other Centre details that all candidates will need to enter onto the answer sheet may appear, plus the start and finish times of the assessment

- any equipment that is not allowed during the assessment has been removed
- the Candidate Attendance Register is signed as candidates enter the room and before they take their places
- answer sheets are given out and the candidates instructed to complete their personal details, the examination details and Centre details.
- Centre, candidate and test details on the OMR answer sheet are accurately completed. It is recommended that each candidate is provided with their registration number and Centre number clearly written or typed so that it is easy for candidates to transfer to the answer sheet.
- every candidate has correctly completed the details by checking each candidate's answer sheet before the test begins. This should be completed BEFORE question papers are handed out. (See Additional Guidance Notes for Examination Supervisors for Completing Candidate Answer Sheet)
- only candidates, Supervisors, representatives of Pearson or the regulatory authorities may remain in the room during a multiple-choice test. In the event of an emergency where another person must enter the room, this *must* be noted down on the Supervision Record as a disturbance and a reason given.

Only those candidates whose names appear on the Candidate Attendance Register will be allowed to enter the room and all candidates must be seated at least 20 minutes before the start time of the test. All candidates must sit the examination at the same time. Only in exceptional circumstances may a candidate enter the room after the start of the assessment and no entry will be permitted after the test has been in progress for 20 minutes. Exceptional circumstances include:

- public service delay – a signature attesting to this would be required from an appropriate official
- pressure of work delaying the candidate leaving the workplace – a signature is required from the employer to this effect
- unavoidable delay because of accidents or other hold-ups which can be verified later.

Ten minutes before the test start time, a second Supervisor will bring in the question papers and both Supervisors will sign the Supervision Record to say that this has happened. Both Supervisors should verify that the correct pack is being used on the correct date before opening the question papers. Any instructions to candidates should be read out so that clarification can be given before the question papers are distributed. In addition, candidates should be instructed to switch off mobile phones and leave them on the desk in front of them.

When every candidate has received a question paper, the instruction to turn over the question paper and the instruction to begin should be given; the exact times of start and finish must be written on the chalkboard or flipchart. The second Supervisor should remain in the room for an extra 5 minutes approximately to ensure that there are no initial problems; that Supervisor may then leave the room.

Supervision practice during the multiple-choice test

No candidate should leave the room until the test has been in progress for 30 minutes. Should this occur, the Supervisor must ensure that the question paper, answer sheet and any other equipment is kept in the test room. An entry must also be made on the Supervision Record.

Supervisors must devote the whole of the time to observation of the candidates. No other work should be undertaken during this time and magazines, newspapers, books etc must not be allowed into the test room. Supervisors must ensure that candidates do not use unfair means either by helping one another, copying, using books, notes etc.

Supervisors are particularly requested to prevent anything that will disturb candidates and they should keep interruptions to the minimum. For example, it is helpful to inform candidates 10 – 15 minutes before the end of the test that time is becoming short, but no observations should be made about the work of candidates.

In walking round the room, Supervisors should not lean over candidates' shoulders or in any way make contact with them. If such items as calculators break down, the situation should be handled quietly, another calculator provided and the candidate given appropriate extra time. Centres should consider providing Supervisors with a stopwatch so that the extra time can be accurately defined. Any such instances will be written on the candidate's work book/answer sheet and the Supervision Record.

Where any instance of a candidate using unfair means is discovered, the script will be cancelled, the question paper/work book/answer sheet removed from the candidate, and the candidate asked to leave the room to report to the member of the team who has responsibility for quality assurance.

At the end of the test session, the Supervisor will bring the cancelled script out of the room along with the other scripts. An investigation will then take place in order to reach a decision as to what further steps should be taken. For example, it may be prudent to prevent the candidate from sitting further tests, or to cancel such tests that have been taken. The final report should be sent to Pearson Operations Department.

Procedure at the end of the test session

All answer sheets/work books and question papers must be collected. Answer sheets should be checked against the Attendance Register to ensure that no candidate's work has been omitted and then signed by the Supervisor in the space marked Centre Co-ordinator Signature. The question papers and answer sheets/work books should be put in an envelope or parcel, as appropriate; the Supervisor's Report/s should also be included.

ALL MATERIALS MUST BE POSTED, RECORDED DELIVERY, TO PEARSON ON THE SAME DAY THAT THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS HAVE BEEN TAKEN. If the test session finishes after the last post has gone, the materials should be locked away overnight and sent first post the next day. Please let Pearson Centre Support know that this is happening.

Centres should also note that question papers may not be kept or photocopied.

Other considerations

- Centres should contact Pearson Centre Support if question papers have not been received at least 3 working days prior to the test dates.
- Centres should keep a record of when they have posted test materials back to Pearson in case of loss in transit. Pearson recommends that all papers are returned by courier or recorded post.