

## SOA Exams Moving to Computer-Based Delivery: Additional Details

*Updated October 15, 2020*

The SOA is moving to a computer-based testing (CBT) approach for nearly all examinations beginning with the Fall 2020 written-answer exam administration. Candidates will take their exams at a Prometric testing facility. Prometric's technology and testing platform will allow for the use of Excel and Word on written-answer exams as needed. Candidates without access to a Prometric test center should e-mail SOA customer service to request assistance. These requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

### The Prometric Center Experience for FSA Written-Answer Exams

#### Exam Timing

- Once seated at your designated Prometric workstation, you will have up to 10 minutes prior to the start of the exam to read through an instructional tutorial on navigation, saving and submitting your files.
- A clock on your computer screen will display the time you have remaining for the exam. The clock will start to count down when you click "Start the Test."
- Once you start the test, the clock cannot be paused. You must submit your files for grading and click on "Finish Test" before your clock runs out.
- There is no specifically designated read-through time or break time, but 15 minutes has been added to the standard length of time for your exam. For example, on a 5-hour exam, once you click on "Start the Test," the clock will start counting down from 5 hours 15 minutes.
- You may take breaks at any time after you click on "Start the Test." The clock will continue to count down during any break you choose to take. All applicable Prometric security guidelines will apply if you exit the main exam room to take a break.

#### During the Exam

- You will use Word and Excel to construct your responses and be restricted to working and submitting one Word document and one Excel file. See information later in this document on which Word and Excel features will be available.
- The exam questions, case studies, formula sheets, tables and/or other material will be provided as PDF files.
- The exam questions will be repeated in the Word document that will also hold the responses.
- The Excel file may be pre-loaded with data.
- You will not receive hard copies of the exam questions.

- You will be provided with scratch paper,\* which will be handed in to a Prometric center administrator and shredded.
- Each exam will have specific instructions for providing responses. For example, an exam could instruct you to provide written explanations in the Word document and calculations in the Excel file.
- You will submit your completed Word and Excel files electronically via the Prometric submission portal.

[View a demo video simulating the exam environment](#) you will experience at the Prometric testing center.

[Learn more about the safety and security measures](#) at Prometric centers.

\*Some exams will require the use of a paper answer booklet at Prometric centers – see Exams with Special Arrangements for Fall 2020 below. For these exams, candidates will be provided with scratch paper within the answer booklet.

### Fall Exam Schedule

The fall exam schedule is posted on the [Education General Information page](#).

### Sample Exam Questions

New sample exam questions are now available on the home page for each written-answer exam. The questions are designed to give candidates an understanding of how written-answer questions may be posed in a CBT environment.

### Availability of Word and Excel Features in Prometric Testing Environment

1. Candidates will be able to copy and paste between Word and Excel and vice versa, including pasting cells from Excel into Word as a table.
2. There is a file size limit of 25MB per file.
3. Analysis-ToolPak in Excel will not be available.
4. Solver in Excel will not be available.
5. Candidates will not have access to Help in Excel and Word.
6. Certain short-cut keys will be disabled. See below for the full list.

The following list of shortcut keys will not be available

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| ALT - F4 Down    | CTRL - P Down  |
| ALT - F4 Up      | CTRL - P Up    |
| ALT - Space Down | CTRL -ESC Down |
| ALT - Space Up   | CTRL- ESC Up   |
| ALT -ESC Down    | CTRL-ALT-DEL   |
| ALT- ESC Up      | CTRL-ESC       |

|                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| ALT -Tab Down            | CTRL-N              |
| ALT- Tab Up              | CTRL-SHIFT-N        |
| ALT-ESC                  | F1                  |
| ALT-F4                   | F1 Down             |
| ALT-Space                | F1 Up               |
| ALT-TAB                  | F11                 |
| Application/Context Menu | F11 Down            |
| Application Down         | F11 Up              |
| Application Up           | F3                  |
| CTRL - B Down            | Left WIN Down       |
| CTRL - B Up              | Left WIN Up         |
| CTRL - L Down            | Right WIN Down      |
| CTRL - L Up              | Right WIN Up        |
| CTRL - N Down            | Shift - F10 Down    |
| CTRL - N Up              | Shift - F10 Up      |
| CTRL - O Down            | Shift - F10         |
| CTRL - O Up              | Windows keys (both) |

### Exams with Special Arrangements for Fall 2020

Two exams have been identified as exceptions needing special arrangements for the Fall 2020 administration due to infrastructure requirements to securely capture unique hand-written calculations, figures and graphs. It is anticipated that an appropriate mechanism can be implemented by the Spring 2021 administration, but for the fall 2020 administration the following assessment methods will be used.

- The **Long-Term Actuarial Mathematics (LTAM) Exam** will be run as a traditional paper and pencil exam at SOA organized exam centers, not at Prometric locations.
- The **QFI Quantitative Finance Exam** will be administered at Prometric test centers, but candidates will submit hand-written answers to select questions in a paper answer booklet to be collected by Prometric and enter answers electronically for other questions.

Please send any questions to [customerservice@soa.org](mailto:customerservice@soa.org).