

Remote exam sittings: FAQs for candidates

We understand that candidates will be concerned about how the coronavirus pandemic might affect their NCTJ studies and exams.

We are working closely with our centres, and taking advice from our regulators and other public bodies, to plan for a range of scenarios, including remote exam sittings. The NCTJ announced on 6 May that we will be running remote exam sittings in May and June. Our intention is to continue to offer remote exams to candidates in July, August and September as well, until exams can be sat in centre again.

We hope the following FAQs will be helpful to candidates who may have questions about sitting exams remotely. As the coronavirus pandemic is an evolving situation, these FAQs will be updated as required. Any updates will be communicated with centres and candidates.

These FAQs should be read in conjunction with the NCTJ's coronavirus contingency plan. The latest version of the plan can be found on the NCTJ website.

I'd like to sit my exam remotely, where will I sit the exam?

Sitting your exams remotely means that you will sit them from home, to avoid unnecessary travel at this time.

When can I sit my exams?

The updated exams schedule for 2019-20 and the exams schedule for 2020-21 are available for you to view in the student resources area of the website. We anticipate that all NCTJ exams will be run remotely in May, June and July. Our intention is to continue to offer remote exams to centre candidates in August and September as well, until exams can be sat in centre again. We are keeping this under review in consultation with our regulators.

Which exams can I sit remotely?

All diploma exams, including shorthand, can be sat remotely.

How will remote exams work?

Your centre will book, facilitate, invigilate and be the point of contact for your exams. For exams that are held on Cirrus, these will be remotely proctored via a remote monitoring platform called Proctorio. Should you have a problem during the exam, you should call your centre contact who will be able to pause your exam in order to help you with, and rectify, your query.

For exams that are not on Cirrus, your centre will invigilate these via Zoom.

What will I need in order to be able to sit my exams remotely?

You should have access to a quiet, secure room in which to sit the exam, to avoid disruption. You must have access to a secure, stable internet connection, and a computer with a working webcam and a microphone. For exams such as production journalism, videojournalism and broadcast radio/TV, you will require access to the specialist software at home.

What happens if I forget my Cirrus username/password and cannot access my exam?

You should ensure you know your username and password prior to sitting a live exam. You can access Cirrus via the following link to ensure you access your dashboard

<https://nctj.cirrusplatform.com>

Can I sit a mock exam first?

Your centre can schedule mock exams for you as normal and you will also have a free of charge test to check the secure monitoring software in Cirrus.

What happens if my internet cuts out half way through my exam or I experience technical problems?

You must ensure that you are satisfied you can sit the exam remotely and have a secure, stable internet connection. If you are concerned about this, then we would advise that you wait to sit your exams once your centre has reopened.

If you encounter any technical problems once your exam has begun, please contact your centre directly. Your centre will provide a point of contact for this purpose in advance of the exam. This person will be able to pause, un-pause and add extra time to your exam, as appropriate.

What if I don't want to sit my exam remotely?

Sitting exams remotely is optional. We understand that it will not suit everybody and you can of course defer your exam sitting until a later date, when it can be sat in centre.