

ProctorExam & XAMS Guidance for Functional Skills learners

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Please note, changes to the previously published version of this document are highlighted in yellow.

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance document is to ensure our learners are provided with important information prior to taking their Functional Skills exams remotely, using ProctorExam. Key changes between published versions of this document are highlighted in yellow.

What is ProctorExam?

[ProctorExam](#) is a web-based service used by learners, it provides greater flexibility, enabling you to complete your Functional Skills exams from a remote location.

What is XAMS?

XAMS is an assessment software created by Coelrind, it is the exam platform that you will use to complete your Functional Skills exams.

You will be provided with a link to your exam in XAMS after you have setup ProctorExam.

You need both ProctorExam and XAMS open for the whole duration of your exam.

What do I need to complete my exam?

A laptop or computer

You will need a laptop or computer to be able to take your exam. This is because the Google Chrome plug-in required to share your screen (more on that later) is only compatible with a laptop or desktop computer. This means that you cannot take your exam on a mobile device or tablet.

A webcam

Your proctor (invigilator) needs to be able to see you and your surroundings clearly, at all times. During the set-up process, you will see what your webcam is sharing and can make any necessary adjustments prior to sitting your exam.

A microphone

Your proctor will need to be able to hear what is going on within your exam location. During the set-up process, you will be asked to speak into the microphone to ensure ProctorExam can hear you.

A speaker

One of the requirements within ProctorExam is that the learner uses a speaker. During the set-up process, you will be asked if you can hear a jingle to ensure your speaker is working.

A steady internet connection

In order to sit a proctored exam, you will need a minimum of 2.0 Mbit/s upload speed, 10 Mbit/s download speed and ping under 25 ms. If your internet does not meet these requirements, you should inform your training provider that your internet is not suitable to sit a proctored exam. You can check your internet speed [here](#). ProctorExam will check these requirements as part of the system checks, therefore you will be unable to sit a proctored exam if your internet does not meet these requirements.

NB: If possible, we recommend that you limit other user's access to the same internet connection during the duration of your exam. This will help ensure you have the best possible internet connection.

Google Chrome

There is no installation of unnecessary software required for your computer to take your exam via ProctorExam. However, you will need the most up to date version of Google Chrome so that you can run ProctorExam's [screen sharing extension](#).

Photo ID

Your proctor will need to identify you. VTCT (Skillsfirst) will accept one of the following forms of photographic ID as evidence of verification:

- ✓ A valid passport
- ✓ A signed UK photo card / driving license
- ✓ Employee ID card.

If ID cannot be authenticated before your exam starts, you will not be able to proceed with the exam.

What should I avoid?

NB: Your exam will be delivered in line with regulatory requirements. A FAILURE TO ADHERE TO THE BELOW GUIDANCE MAY RESULT IN YOUR EXAM BEING VOIDED.

Other people

You must be the only person taking the exam. You must be the only person in the room at all times.

Additional devices

You are not allowed to use any additional devices. This includes second screens, mobile devices, tablets or Smart watches.

Any exceptions to the above must be agreed between VTCT (Skillsfirst) and your Training Provider prior to the date of the assessment in line with our Reasonable Adjustment policy.

Headphones and earphones

The proctor must be able to hear everything that you can hear for the duration of the exam, this means that the use of wired or wireless headphones/earphones is not permitted.

Talking (or singing)

Any talking or singing will be marked as suspicious behaviour. Please ensure that you are in a quiet environment and refrain from speaking aloud.

Leaving the camera frame

After the proctor provides you with the keycode, you must stay within the camera frame until your exam is finished. Comfort breaks are not permitted during the exam.

Other items on your computer/laptop

You must only have access to ProctorExam and XAMS on your computer/laptop during the exam. You are not permitted to access any other websites or open other tabs during your exam. This will be seen as a breach of exam rules and your exam could be void.

Spell check/predictive text (Functional Skills English Writing exams)

The use of any kind of spelling/grammar checking software or predictive text is strictly prohibited during Functional Skills English Writing exams. You will need to disable/uninstall this prior to your exam starting. Failure to do so will result in your exam being void.

I've received an email from ProctorExam. What do I do?

You will receive an automated email from ProctorExam exactly 72 hours before the time of your exam. The email will ask you to complete a series of checks on the computer/laptop you intend to sit your exam on, this is to ensure the webcam, microphone and screen share are working. These checks must be carried out at least 24 hours before your exam is scheduled to take place. It's also important to complete these checks using the same device and internet connection you will be sitting the exam on. If your computer/laptop is connected to a VPN, you will need to disconnect this prior to attempting the system checks and joining the exam. If attempting the exam in a workplace, your IT team may need to 'whitelist' the below URL's:

<https://skillsfirst.proctorexam.com/>
<https://proctorexam.com>

Please be aware that the 'duration' on this email is the duration of your ProctorExam session, NOT the time you have to complete your exam. The duration of the ProctorExam session is 45 minutes longer than your exam timer. If you are unsure how much time you will have to complete your exam, your training provider will be able to confirm this.

If you have not received the email 72 hours before, please contact your training provider no later than 24 hours before your exam, this gives your training provider sufficient time to contact VTCT (Skillsfirst).

The email from ProctorExam contains three steps which you must follow.

NB: The most recent version of Google Chrome must be installed on your machine before you follow the below.

Email 1: Complete the system checks

Step 1: *"Download the ProctorExam chrome plugin [Click Here]"*

Select '*Click Here*' where prompted on the email and follow the instructions onscreen. The link will take you to Google Chrome's webstore and will invite you to add '*ProctorExam Screen Sharing*' as a plugin on Google Chrome.

NB: If you are taken to an alternative internet browser, copy the URL and paste this into Google Chrome.

Step 2: *"Complete the system check [Click Here]"*

Select '*Click Here*' on the email where prompted and follow the instructions onscreen. The link will take you to ProctorExam's Check Requirements page. This will help you ensure your microphone, speakers and webcam are compatible with ProctorExam, while testing your bandwidth and ability to screenshare.

NB: It is imperative that you complete the system check at least 24 hours before your exam is due to start to ensure your computer/laptop is compatible with ProctorExam.

NB: When completing the screen share step of your system checks, you will need to click on the small picture of your screen before the 'Share' button is able to be clicked (see below). Please ensure you have shared your entire screen.



Step 3: *“Once you finish the System Check you will receive an invitation to your exam.”*

Email 2: Setting Up ProctorExam

Upon completing the system checks you will receive a second automated email from ProctorExam within 15 minutes. The email contains three steps.

Important information for Mac devices

If you are having difficulty sharing your screen on a Mac device, it is likely due to your privacy settings. You may need to follow the below instructions to amend the privacy settings on your Mac device.

- 1) Go to system preferences by clicking the Apple logo in the top left corner of your screen
- 2) Click on Security & Privacy
- 3) Click on the picture of the lock in the bottom left corner to allow you to make changes
- 4) Enter your Mac password if prompted, if you do not receive a prompt, proceed to Step 5
- 5) Select Screen Recording on the left hand side
- 6) Press the tick box next to Google Chrome.

Step 1: *“Keep your photo ID at hand”*

You will be asked to show and take a picture of your ID prior to the exam taking place. Please ensure you keep this at hand.

Step 2: *“Check when your exam time slot starts [click here]”*

Select *‘Click Here’* on the email and follow the instructions onscreen. If your time slot has not yet started, you will be unable to proceed.

Step 3: *“Once your exam time slot opens, please go back to the link on Step 2”*

Go to Step 2, select ‘*Click Here*’ on the email and follow the instructions onscreen.

Welcome to the remote proctoring session for 19/12/2023 09:00 Skillsfirst Proctor Testing: JC Test - Reading Level 1

Before we get started, we must first set up ProctorExam for your remote proctoring session. This will take a few minutes. Select the button below to begin setting up.

Your exam won't begin until you have finished setting up and select the Start Your Exam button at the end of this procedure.

[Set up ProctorExam](#)

Before accessing your exam screen, you will be asked to:

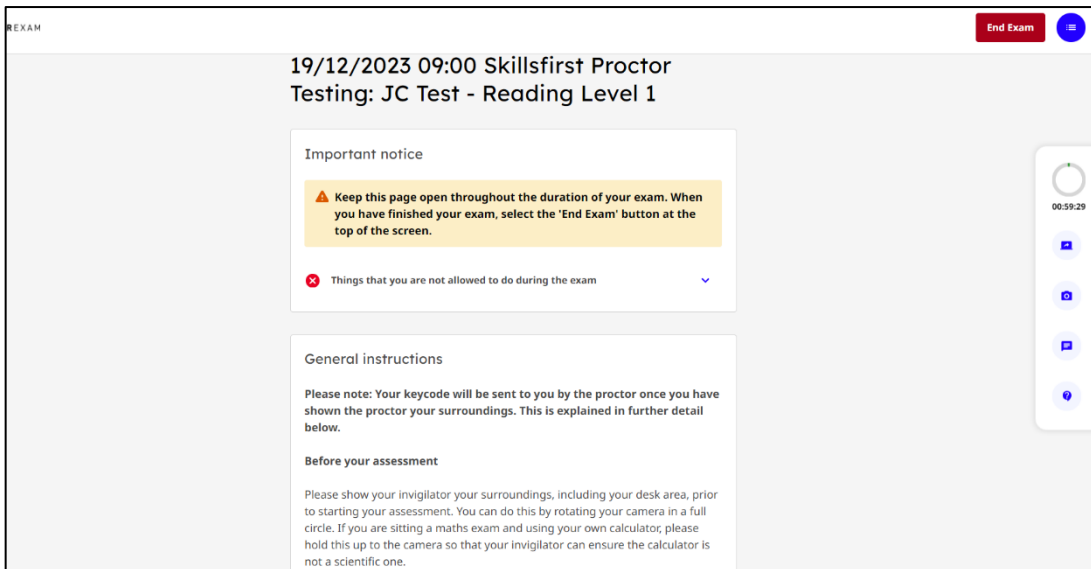
- repeat the check requirements
- close down all other web pages
- take a photo of your ID
- take a photo of yourself

NB: Your webcam and screen are visible to your proctor at this point.

The recording of your exam will be retained by VTCT (Skillsfirst) for six months, this includes the photos of your ID and the photo of you. Only Skillsfirst and ProctorExam staff will have access to this. Please be aware, we may have to show the recording to our Regulator, Ofqual for the purposes of their auditing functions.

If you have any queries regarding the steps you need to take, you can contact your proctor via the ‘Proctor’ chat box available at the bottom of your page (as seen in the screenshot above). Alternatively, technical support is available via the ‘Tech Support’ chat box (as seen in the screenshot above).

Once you have completed all system checks, you will be taken to the screen that contains the link to start your exam, there is a screenshot of this on the next page. Please ensure you show your surroundings to the proctor at this stage. You can do this by picking up the laptop/webcam and rotating it around the room to demonstrate you are in exam conditions. You will also need to show the proctor your desk area to ensure you do not have access to unauthorised materials.



Please ensure that you keep this page open for the entirety of your exam. There will be a timer on the right side of your screen. This timer is the duration of your ProctorExam session, NOT the time you have to complete your exam. The ProctorExam timer is always set to 45 minutes longer than your exam timer.

Please read and follow the instructions within the General Instructions section.

Once complete, read and follow the instructions within the Individual Instructions section.

The link has taken me to XAMS. What do I do now?

Step 1: Show your surroundings and enter your keycode

Your proctor needs to be able to see you and your surroundings at all times for the duration of the exam.

Your video feed will be shown on your screen as you start your exam. This will show you exactly what is recorded and how. You are required to use your camera/webcam to show your surroundings to your proctor before your exam starts. Please ensure all revision notes/additional documentation is removed from the room.

Please be aware your proctor will be able to see you, your screen and your surroundings at all times. Therefore, please make sure you are front-facing during the exam. If you do not follow this your exam could be void.

Make sure you cover any irrelevant private information you would not like to be visible, such as pictures or private objects.

Your proctor will provide you with a keycode to start your exam. This will be shown in the chat box entitled “Proctor Chat”. The proctor will only provide you with this keycode after they have seen your surroundings, including your desk/table and they can confirm that you are in the room alone, under exam conditions. If you are unable to do this, you will not be able to proceed with the exam.

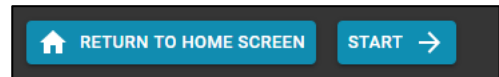
Step 2: Read the Exam Instructions

Read the instructions that are made available prior to you starting to your exam.

If you need to go back to your instructions at any point, you can do so by pressing “Instructions” in the top left-hand corner of your screen.

Step 3: Start Your Exam

Once you are ready to begin your exam, press “Start”.

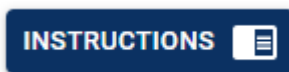


Pressing “Start” will open the first question of your exam and trigger the time to start counting down.

How do I navigate XAMS?

Below you will find guidance on how to navigate your way through the exam upon clicking ‘Start’.

If you have started your exam but wish to go back to view the exam instructions, you can do so by clicking the button below.



Questions

On the left-hand side of the screen will be a list of numbers. These relate to the questions and tasks that you will need to complete.

- Questions that you have attempted will appear in blue (this colour will change if you have applied a reasonable adjustment colour preference, see section later on in this guide)
- The question you are currently answering will be underlined
- Unanswered questions will appear in white.

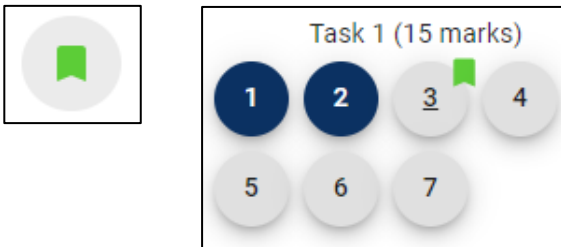


You can move between questions by simply selecting a question number.

Alternatively, you can use the buttons (shown below) at the top of the screen to manoeuvre your way through the exam.

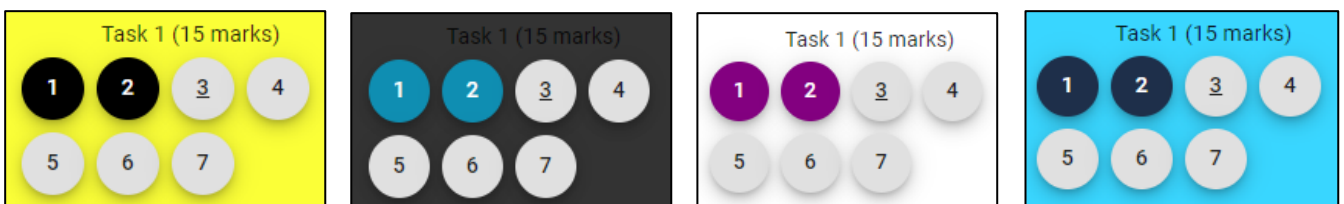


If you wish to bookmark a question to return to later, you can click the 'bookmark' button (shown below) which will be on the right-hand side of the page. This will change colour, and apply over the top of the question number, to show that the question has been bookmarked.



Preferences

You have the option to change the colour scheme of your exam. This option is designed to improve accessibility for learners, such as those with visual impairments. In the top right hand corner of the screen you will see that the exam colour scheme is always set to 'default'. You can change your exam colour scheme by clicking on this and selecting one of the other available preferences. To reset the colour schemes you will need to re-select 'default'. Examples of some of the available colour schemes can be seen below, we have used the question numbers to demonstrate the colour schemes.



Time

The time you have remaining to complete the exam will display in the top right hand corner of the screen.

The clocks below demonstrate how the time will appear during your exam. As you will see, the clock will change colour to indicate that you are approaching the end of your allotted time.



Please note: If you are sitting a reformed Functional Skills mathematics exam and your allotted time expires for Section A, you will automatically be moved on to Section B.

You have 30 minutes to complete Section A and 90 minutes to complete Section B.

Expanding an answer box (Writing Exams)

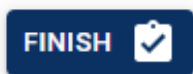
During a Functional Skills English Writing exam, you have the option to extend or collapse your answer box by dragging the box by the corner (shown below in red).



How do I finish my exam and close XAMS and ProctorExam?

Step 1: Finish your exam and close XAMS

Once you have answered all questions and are happy that you have completed your exam to the best of your ability, select “Finish” on your exam screen and follow the instructions.



You can now also close the tab for XAMS.

Step 2: Submit your recording and close ProctorExam

On your ProctorExam page, select “Finish Exam”, available in the top right-hand corner of your screen, and follow the instructions.



Following this process will ensure that your webcam and screen are no longer being shared with your proctor.

When do I receive my results?

Your result will be released to the training provider you are completing your qualification with. For timeframes on receiving your result, please contact your training provider.

GOOD LUCK!