

# OCR GCSE Computer-Based Tests: FAQs

## What are computer-based tests?

Computer-based tests offer an alternative option to traditional paper-based assessment.

Instead of sitting written examinations on paper, candidates are presented with the tests at a computer and they complete it on screen. The completed tests are returned to OCR electronically.

It should be noted that, to run the tests, centres are required to install CBT software on their computing network (see minimum technical requirements below).

## What computer-based tests are available in 2012?

Computer-based tests are available as alternatives to paper-based examinations for the following GCSE units:

Subject	Unit(s)	Availability	
		January 2012	June 2012
Citizenship	A342	✓	✓
Economics	A591	–	✓
Engineering: Single/Double Award	A622, A624	✓	✓
Environmental and Land Based Science	B491, B492, B493, B494, B495	✓	✓
Environmental and Land Based Science	B681	–	✓
Geography A	A674	–	✓
Health and Social Care: Single/Double Award	A914	✓	✓
ICT	B061, B063	✓	✓
Latin	A401	✓	✓
Law	B142	–	✓
Manufacturing: Single/Double Award	B232, B234	✓	✓

## Are there any practice tests?

Yes, practice tests are available. These can be used as mock tests if you wish and can be run at any time. You will be able to print out responses locally and mark them using the accompanying mark schemes, which will also be provided.

## Who is responsible for running computer-based tests in my centre?

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to ensure that your centre is appropriately equipped to administer the tests in terms of system requirements and venue requirements. The Exams Officer within the centre is responsible for the conduct of the computer-based tests within the bounds of the [JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations](#).

## How do I get started with computer-based tests?

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You just need to make entries for the computer-based tests, ensuring you have the capability to run them (see **Technical** below). You will then need to get a centre registration code. This code allows centres to register and log in to the CBT system, [Connect Plus](#). Instructions on how to use the code are provided on the [OCR website](#). You will need to run a 'familiarisation test' to demonstrate that you can run the computer-based tests.

## Where do I go for further help and support?

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For dedicated CBT support, please contact the OCR CBT Support Desk on 0845 0766118 or at [OCRCBTsupport@rm.com](mailto:OCRCBTsupport@rm.com).

## Administration

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### What centre approval do I need for computer-based tests?

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If you are approved to offer OCR GCSEs, then no additional centre approval is required. However, you **must** ensure that your centre is equipped to offer the minimum technical requirements (see below). If you are not currently an OCR centre, you will need to complete an application form. You can request an application form from our Customer Contact Centre by calling 01223 553998 or emailing us at [general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)

### How do I make entries for computer-based tests?

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Centres make entries for computer-based tests in the same way as for paper-based examinations: via EDI or Interchange. However, when making entries, you **must** ensure that you use the correct option code. See the [OCR Admin Guide](#) for details.

### Are there any access arrangements available for computer-based tests?

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Yes, candidates will be able to change the font size that is used in their test. They will also be able to change the text/background colour combination.

Where an application for extra time has been granted through Access Arrangements Online, centres can go to the CBT software and apply this **in advance** of the candidate's test once the candidate data is available to view. For the January 2012 series, candidate data will be available to view from 14 November. For the June 2012 series, candidate data will be available to view from 2 April.

Further details on access arrangements will be supplied with the CBT documentation.

### Will I be able to accommodate tests in different rooms?

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Yes, once the candidate data is available to view within the CBT system, you can schedule test sittings if candidates will be taking the tests in separate groups, for example, to accommodate test sittings in more than one room. For the January 2012 series, candidate data will be available to view from 14 November. For the June 2012 series, candidate data will be available to view from 2 April.

## When do the computer-based tests take place in the January 2012 series?

The tests take place as follows:

Subject	Unit	Test date
Citizenship	A342	Mon 16 January pm
Engineering: Single/Double Award	A622	Tue 24 Jan pm
	A624	Tue 31 Jan pm
Environmental and Land Based Science	B491	Thu 26 Jan am
	B492	Mon 30 Jan pm
	B493	Tue 31 Jan am
	B494	Wed 1 Feb pm
	B495	Thu 2 Feb am
Health and Social Care: Single/Double Award	A914	Wed 25 Jan pm
ICT	B061	Fri 13 Jan am
	B063	Tue 17 Jan am
Latin	A401	Wed 11 Jan pm
Manufacturing: Single/Double Award	B232	Thu 19 Jan am
	B234	Fri 27 Jan pm

## When do the computer-based tests take place in the June 2012 series?

The tests take place as follows:

Subject	Unit	Test date
Citizenship	A342	Wed 16 May am
Economics	A591	Fri 18 May pm
Engineering: Single/Double Award	A622	Mon 14 May pm
	A624	Fri 18 May am
Environmental and Land Based Science	B491	Mon 25 June pm
	B492	Wed 20 June am
	B493	Mon 21 May am
	B494	Fri 22 June pm
	B495	Thu 24 May am
	B681	Wed 30 May pm
Geography A	A674	Mon 25 June am
Health and Social Care: Single/Double Award	A914	Tue 26 June pm
ICT	B061	Fri 1 June am
	B063	Wed 13 June pm
Latin	A401	Fri 25 May am
Manufacturing: Single/Double Award	B232	Fri 22 June am
	B234	Tue 26 June am
Law	B142	Mon 11 June am

## How do I get results for computer-based tests?

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Candidates will receive their results for computer-based GCSEs at the same time and in the same way as they receive results for their paper-based exams.

## Technical

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### What hardware/software do I need?

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In advance of a test, centres will access a Test Centre Administrator website to manage staff users and computers, schedule tests, and manage candidates and test sittings. No software installation will be required.

Workstations that will be used at exam time will require software installation: centres will use at least one admin workstation (to administer/invigilate a sitting) per 100 candidate workstations (the computers at which candidates take the test).

Please see the minimum technical requirements below. Further details will be supplied with the CBT documentation.

### What are the minimum technical requirements to operate CBTs?

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For the Test Centre Administrator website, the following browsers are supported:

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 7
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 8
- Mozilla Firefox 3+
- Apple Safari 5
- Apple Safari 6

The minimum specifications for the workstations are:

#### **Minimum candidate computer specification:**

- Processor Speed: 1.6Ghz
- Memory (RAM): 1Gb (256Mb is the lowest supported spec but please contact the support team if <1Gb is anticipated)

#### **Minimum admin computer specification:**

- Processor Speed: 2.4GHz
- Memory (RAM): 512Mb

#### **Cross platform compatibility:**

Workstation software for candidate and admin will be capable of running on:

- |                               |                                     |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Windows XP Home SP2         | • Windows Vista Ultimate            |
| • Windows XP Professional SP2 | • Windows 7 Home                    |
| • Windows Vista Home          | • Windows 7 Professional            |
| • Windows Vista Premium       | • Windows 7 Ultimate                |
| • Windows Vista Business      | • Mac OS X 10.5                     |
| • Windows Vista Enterprise    | • Mac OS X 10.6 (excluding PowerPC) |

The CBT system will support proxy servers configured using the following methods:

- Anonymous HTTP
- Basic HTTP Authentication
- NTLM (Integrated Authentication)

Proxy servers that require manual authentication (e.g. a web-based form to agree to terms and conditions) will not work automatically.

The software has no dependence on particular types of network system. For clarity, supported networks will include wireless, novell and ad-hoc networks which may be permanent or non-permanent.

#### **Connectivity:**

- Minimum Internet bandwidth: 512Kbits/sec
- Minimum LAN wireless bandwidth: 54 Mbits/sec
- Minimum LAN wired bandwidth: 10 Mbits/sec switched network or equivalent

The bandwidths given above reflect the bandwidth actually available to the CBT system (i.e. the network is not being used for other purposes at the same time, and this is the actual bandwidth available, not just that claimed by your Internet Service Provider).

Please also bear in mind the following points:

- All CBT websites, like most secure sites, use the HTTPS protocol, which establishes connections on TCP port 443. If you can access other HTTPS sites from your browser without issue you should be able to access all CBT sites. If you are unsure, there is a URL that you can browse to test your current configuration. The support team will provide these details.
- Proxy settings, once entered and stored, should not need to be re-entered unless your proxy configuration changes.  
During installation of the CBT software on a Windows workstation, the software will attempt to read the current proxy configuration stored on the workstation. If this is not possible the software will prompt for the proxy information to be entered upon first run.  
On an Apple Mac, proxy information, if required, will need to be configured during first run.
- You may need to configure appropriate rules in the workstation firewall to allow connectivity. During installation of the CBT software on a Windows workstation the software will attempt to create appropriate rules in Windows Firewall. If you use a third party software firewall on the workstation, you may need to manually configure appropriate rules in the workstation firewall to allow connectivity. On an Apple Mac, you may need to manually configure appropriate rules in the workstation firewall to allow connectivity.
- The administrator software must be able to connect to candidate workstations on your network. Candidate workstations will try to connect to administrator workstations on TCP port 8080 at first, and will increment the port number (8081, 8082 etc) if the initial port is not available. You may need to allow inbound connections on administrator workstations around this port range.
- Since all Internet communications from your test centre network will be initiated by your browser, administrator software or candidate software, the CBT system does not require any inbound rules from the Internet to your network to be configured.

### Performance limits:

The CBT system is designed to operate within the following limits:

- There will be no more than 300 candidates taking a test at the same time in a test centre.
- The tests being taken result in typical candidate responses of no more than 100KB per candidate.
- Test centres will use at least one administrator workstation per 100 candidate workstations.

### How do I get the CBT software?

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Once you make your entries you will need to register and log in to the CBT system, [Connect Plus](#). You can then download the CBT software from the 'Computers' tab on the Connect Plus homepage. For installation instructions, please see the *User Guide*, available from the **help** link in Connect Plus.

### Are there any user guides?

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Yes, there is a *Test Centre Guide* aimed at staff responsible for managing and administering CBTs. The *Test Centre Guide* and other support documents are available from the **help** link within the CBT system, [Connect Plus](#).