

FAQs for in-person examinations (for writers in Ontario only)

Updated September 27, 2022

The information in this document is current as of September 27, 2022. As public health and safety guidelines continue to evolve, the information in this document is subject to change. This information is applicable to students writing in-person examinations including the CPA Common Final Examination (CFE), Professional Education Program (PEP) examinations, Preparatory examinations, the Post Designation Public Accounting (PDPA) examination and the CPA reciprocity (CPARE) examination in Ontario only.

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Delivery Approach

1. How will the in-person exams be delivered?

The examinations are scheduled to take place in person at exam venues across Canada. The examinations will be held in a similar manner to pre-pandemic examinations, with additional safety measures in place.

Health & Safety Protocols

2. What are the health and safety measures that will be in place for the in-person exams?

To provide our writers and staff with a safe environment for the exams, we will follow the provincial public health guidelines, and in many cases, we will exceed the public health guidelines. Each region will have their own health and safety measures in place for in-person exams.

These requirements are subject to change based on new public health orders or further requirements set by writing centres.

3. Will I be required to provide a proof of vaccination to write an in-person exam?

No. Writers attending an in-person examinations are not required to provide a proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test.

4. Will I be required to wear a face mask at all times?

While not required, writers are encouraged to wear a face mask at all times in the writing centre, including while writing the examination.

5. Can I bring my own personal protective equipment?

You will be allowed to bring your own mask and hand sanitizer. The profession will have alcohol wipes, disposable face masks, and gloves available once at the centre, which you can request and use at your discretion as needed.

6. What are the safety measures that will be in place for the laptops?

All laptops will be disinfected prior to distribution. Alcohol wipes will be available that you can use to clean your laptop if you choose.

7. What are the procedures for writers with visible seasonal allergies or other conditions that exhibit COVID-like symptoms?

It is recommended that writers who have visible seasonal allergies, or other conditions which would make them appear ill on the day of the examination, contact cfe@cpaontario.ca (CFE), cpamodule@cpaontario.ca (PEP), ppp@cpaontario.ca

(Preparatory) or PDPAandCPARE@cpaontario.ca (PDPA/CPARE) to discuss their situation prior to writing an exam.

8. What if I feel unsafe writing in a public setting like an exam centre?

If an individual is uncomfortable with the risk of writing an exam in an exam centre, they have the option of waiting to take the exam in the next offering. All withdrawals and deferrals (where applicable) are subject to the current penalties and policies.

9. Are all exams going to be in-person?

The CPA profession has returned to in-person examinations, held in exam writing centres since June 2022. The examinations are held in a similar manner to pre-pandemic examinations, with additional safety measures in place.

10. Will there be measures to ensure that writers who test positive for COVID-19 are prevented from writing the exam?

Writers are expected to demonstrate ethical behaviour and follow public health guidelines if they test positive for COVID-19. This may include isolating until symptoms have resolved. Writers who are unable to write their exam due to a positive COVID-19 diagnosis should contact cfe@cpaontario.ca (CFE), cpamodule@cpaontario.ca (PEP), ppp@cpaontario.ca (Preparatory) or PDPAandCPARE@cpaontario.ca (PDPA/CPARE) for information on next steps.

11. What happens if I get sick before an exam?

If you get sick before your exam, please contact cfe@cpaontario.ca (CFE), cpamodule@cpaontario.ca (PEP), ppp@cpaontario.ca (Preparatory) or PDPAandCPARE@cpaontario.ca (PDPA/CPARE) to discuss options available to you to defer or postpone your exam. Please do not arrive at an exam centre if you have COVID symptoms or are otherwise ill.

How to register for an in-person exam

12. How do I select the city I want to write my exam in?

You will choose from the available exam cities when you register for your module or exam in MyPortal. Only cities listed when registering are available as in-person exam centres.

13. Will I have the option to write an online exam instead of going to an exam centre?

No. All writers registered for an exam are required to be in-person at exam centres to write their CPA exams.

14. Where do I find information about where the exam will be held in my city?

Information will be sent out to all exam writers with specific details of the exam location in each city. Requests to change your exam centre to a different city must be made a minimum of 6 weeks in advance of the scheduled exam date and will be considered only if there is capacity available at the requested exam centre. Requests submitted less than 6 weeks in advance of the scheduled exam date may not be accommodated due to location capacities as well as laptop availability. To request to write the exam in a different province, please email cpaaccommodations@cpaontario.ca.

15. I live outside of an exam centre location, do I have to travel to an exam centre to write my exam? Can I complete my exam if I am outside of Canada?

All writers are required to attend the in-person exam at their scheduled location. Accommodation is not made for candidates to write in any cities outside of Canada.

16. Who can writers contact to discuss accommodations under applicable human rights laws in connection with in-person exams?

The CPA profession is committed to meeting its obligations under applicable human rights laws in its administration of in-person examinations. Writers who require an accommodation on the basis of disability or any other prohibited ground of discrimination are encouraged to refer to the [CPA Canada website](#). All request for accommodation must be made a minimum of 10 weeks prior to your exam date.

What to expect at an in-person exam centre

17. What is the schedule like for an exam day? When do I need to arrive and how long will I be there for?

You will be required to arrive at least one hour prior to your exam start time. In some large locations such as Toronto/Mississauga, you may be required to arrive more than one hour prior to your exam to facilitate the sign-in and seating process. Arrival times for each exam centre will be communicated via email. Please refer to the schedule page on our website for information on the examination start time.

Based on the schedule for the exam day, we suggest that writers do not schedule appointments or travel immediately before or after the exam. Food and beverages are not provided at the exam centres.

You will be assigned a seat when you arrive at the centre and must follow all instructions from the CPA staff and contractors on-site. Once you are seated, you will be provided with an exam booklet, a laptop, and calculator. Refer to the [exam blueprints](#) available on the CPA Canada website for information on the length and composition of each exam.

18. Where can I find information on the rules for writing an in-person exam?

All exam regulations are available on the CPA Canada website.

- [CFE](#)
- [PEP & Preparatory](#)

CPA Canada and each CPA region has intentionally set very strict exam regulations for the CPA exams. The intention with these regulations is to maintain the structure and integrity of the CPA exam process and confidentiality of the CPA exam questions. All exam regulations must be followed at all times before, during, and after the examination. You must be familiar with the regulations prior to arriving at your exam centre.

19. What happens if I can't write my in-person exam?

The exam schedule is set nationally by CPA Canada each year. Exam dates cannot be moved or rescheduled as outlined in the [Harmonized Education Policies](#). If you are unable to attend your exam, please contact cpaPEPenrolment@cpaontario.ca (CFE & PEP) or ppp@cpaontario.ca (Preparatory) for information on what your options are to write at a scheduled exam date in the future.

20. How long is an in-person exam?

The duration of an exam varies by examination typically they are between 3-5 hours. Please reference the [exam blueprints](#) to note the length of the exam you are registered for as well as additional details on the format of the exam.

21. What am I allowed to bring into the exam centre?

All exam regulations, which include allowable items are available on the CPA Canada website.

- [CFE](#)
- [PEP & Preparatory](#)

Any prohibited items brought into the exam centre will be confiscated on-site. CPA Canada and each CPA region has intentionally set very strict exam regulations for the CPA exams. The intention with these regulations is to maintain the structure and integrity of the CPA exam process and confidentiality of the CPA exam questions. All exam regulations must be followed at all times before, during, and after the examination. You must be familiar with the regulations prior to arriving at your exam centre.

What to expect when writing your in-person exam

22. Is the time allotted for each case or section of the exam monitored or enforced?

Your exam booklet will give a suggested time allotment for each section of the exam. This is a guideline only and you are expected to manage your own time while writing the exam. The exam centre staff and contractors will start the exam for all writers at the same time

and will give time updates throughout the exam at each hour and when there are 30 minutes and 5 minutes remaining in the exam.

23. Will I be given scheduled break time in between cases or sections of the exam?

No. Once the exam time starts, it runs continuously until time is up. You are able to request to use the washroom facilities by raising your hand and advising an invigilator before leaving the exam room. The exam clock is not stopped for any time spent away from your exam.

24. What type of exam questions will my exam include?

Depending on which exam you are writing, you could have a combination of multiple choice (objective format), constructed response questions, or case-based questions. Please reference the [exam blueprints](#) to note the assessment details for the exam(s) you are registered for.

25. Will I be able to write an open-book exam (i.e. access to notes and materials) as was done for the remote exams?

No. You will not have access to any materials at the exam centre, other than the profession-supplied laptop and access to the profession-supplied reference materials. Any prohibited items brought into the exam centre will be confiscated on-site.

26. What software will be used to write in-person exams?

You will be provided with a profession-supplied laptop to write the exam. Each will be equipped with a numeric keypad. The profession will not provide a mouse, but you are permitted to bring your own wired mouse, and each laptop will have a sufficient number of USB ports for your wired mouse should you choose to bring one. A wireless mouse is not permitted.

You will receive a laptop at the exam centre which will be locked down to restrict access to everything other than the exam software and reference material (if applicable). Within the software, you will have access to a word processor and spreadsheet software to capture your responses, similar to Word and Excel. For more information on the exam software, refer to the [CPA examination software webpage](#).

27. Can I bring my own laptop to write the exam?

No, you are not permitted to bring your own laptop to the exam centre. All writers will receive a profession-supplied laptop with the exam software pre-loaded.

28. Can I use an external monitor connected to my laptop at the exam centre? Can I bring one or will one be provided?

All exam regulations, which include allowable items are available on the CPA Canada website.

- [CFE](#)



- [PEP & Preparatory](#)

Any prohibited items brought into the exam centre, such as an external monitor, will be confiscated on-site. CPA Canada and each CPA region has intentionally set very strict exam regulations for the CPA exams. The intention with these regulations is to maintain the structure and integrity of the CPA exam process and confidentiality of the CPA exam questions. All exam regulations must be followed at all times before, during, and after the examination. You must be familiar with the regulations prior to arriving at your exam centre.

29. Will IT support be available on-site?

Yes, most exam centres will have IT proctors available on-site to support any technical issues that may arise. Some secondary or remote centres are supported with an on-call IT proctor in the event they are needed.