

FAQ: Computer Based Testing for Fall 2020

CAS Exams 5 – 9

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About CBT:

Q: Why was the decision made to move the exams into a CBT environment in Fall 2020?

A: As health and safety concerns continue to be foremost in the minds of the CAS, employers, volunteer proctors, and candidates over the coming months, we decided to execute on our back-up plan now and move all exams into a CBT environment with Pearson VUE due to the pandemic.

The CAS has thoroughly discussed our plans with Pearson VUE and is confident that candidates will be testing in a [safe environment at Pearson Professional Centers](#). The centers follow all local health guidelines and regulations and will provide a consistent testing experience, which was not possible with traditional CAS exam sites. Built specifically for high-stakes test delivery, Pearson Professional Centers will provide candidates with a secure and consistent testing experience in an atmosphere designed to contribute to an optimal test day experience.

All options considered for exam administration in the Fall involved minimizing the risks for candidates while ensuring the integrity of the examination process.

Q: How does this experience differ from the previous CBT pilot of CAS Exam 5 in 2018?

A: The CAS has thoroughly reviewed the issues that surrounded the 2018 exam, to ensure the issues that arose are not repeated, and as a result there are many differences between the upcoming experience and the 2018 experience. Most importantly, in contrast to the prior Exam 5 pilot, all exams will be administered at an established testing center. The CAS has confidence in Pearson VUE as a testing vendor given their extensive experience administering similar types of exams for other global organizations.

Q: Why are exams being offered in a three-week window for Fall 2020 and not as a single day testing event as was done in the past?

A: The three-week exam window offers candidates the most flexibility to schedule their exam at a Pearson Professional Center. This window is not exclusive to CAS candidates. Candidates of other organizations will be scheduling exams during this exam window as well. Pearson VUE is actively managing the demands of many organizations moving their credentialing programs into a CBT environment.

Q: How will the CAS maintain the integrity of its examination process with CBT? (Updated October 6, 2020)

A: The Pearson Professional Centers provide a secure consistent environment for CAS candidates. A standardized check-in process to authenticate the identity of the candidate, a live proctor who will monitor the candidate's behavior throughout the exam session, and cameras ensure that the professional testing center model will provide numerous protections to ensure the integrity of the examination process.

As has always been the case, candidates for CAS examinations are required to adhere to the **Code of Professional Ethics for Candidates**, which reflect the high standards of conduct and practice of the actuarial profession. All candidates, on their applications for examinations, are required to acknowledge that they have read and agree to be bound by the rules and regulations concerning the examinations. In addition, Associates of the CAS who are sitting for exams are bound by the **CAS Code of Professional Conduct**.

The [Examination Discipline Policy](#) prohibits obtaining or providing exam questions before or after the exam or aiding someone else to do so. Since all questions on the examination are possible questions for the item bank that CAS is developing and could appear again on a future exam, discussing any exam question after the exam is in violation of this policy. This includes communicating any information about any of the questions in any form, such as online, via text or email or through social media. Candidates are prohibited from both giving and receiving any such information.

The CAS considers engaging in improper examination conduct to be a serious violation that can result in the CAS disqualifying a candidate's exam and other disciplinary action as may be deemed appropriate.

Exam Registration & Preparation:

Q: How do I register for my exam in the Fall 2020?

A: Candidates will register for the exam by completing an [online registration](#) form on the CAS website. (Note: Candidates who registered for the Spring 2020 exams that were cancelled already have been registered for the fall sitting.)

After registering with the CAS, you will receive an examination authorization to test (ATT) email from Pearson VUE providing you with your login details and notifying you that you are now eligible to start the scheduling process.

You should expect an ATT email within five days of registering with the CAS. Pearson Professional Center locations and exam times are available on a first-come, first-served basis

Q: When does CAS registration close?

A: Candidates are encouraged to register for their exams as soon as possible so they can schedule their preferred exam date/time/location with Pearson VUE. The last date of exam registration with the CAS is August 21, 2020.

Q: It has been five days since I have registered with the CAS and I haven't received my Authorization to Test (ATT) email, who should I contact?

A: Ensure the CAS has your correct email address; contact the Admin and Customer Support department by email: acs@casact.org.

Q: How do I schedule my exam time and location?

A: Candidates will follow the instructions received in their ATT email from Pearson VUE to schedule their exam on the [Pearson site](#). Refer to the [CAS Scheduling Guide](#) for step by step instructions on how to schedule.

Once you schedule your exam, Pearson VUE will send a confirmation letter listing your exam date, your exam time, the address of the exam center, and directions to the exam center. The CAS encourages candidates to schedule their appointments as early as possible in order to secure a desirable location and time.

Q: Why are my location choices only Pearson Professional Centers? (Updated July 24, 2020)

A: CAS has chosen to offer exams in the Pearson Professional Centers only, due in part to the higher level of security, consistent check in procedure, and testing environment they offer for our high stakes exams. The centers are owned and operated by Pearson VUE; no third parties are involved, except in rare circumstances in three countries where Pearson VUE does not have any testing centers.

Q: What if there is not a Pearson Professional Center in my area, or if there is not availability at my local testing center during the testing window?

A: Since we have moved our exams to Pearson VUE you will be required to sit for your examination at a Pearson Professional Center. If your local testing center is not available, you may need to travel to a less convenient testing center. After you've secured a test location and date/time, you can continue to check back to see if a slot opens up at a more convenient location or date/time.

Q: If I decide not to take a fall exam, can I get a refund of the exam fee?

A: The CAS will offer a refund if you do not feel comfortable testing at the Pearson Professional Center. The refund deadline and details will be finalized soon. Candidates who cancel by the deadline will receive a refund of the exam registration fee, minus a \$100 administrative fee. You must cancel with both the CAS and Pearson VUE. You can access your online Pearson VUE account to cancel your seat with Pearson VUE.

Q: How can I request special accommodations? (Updated July 15, 2020)

A: If you have a disability and require a specific (non-ESL) accommodation, such as a time extension or a reader/recorder, you will need to obtain prior approval from the CAS before Pearson VUE can complete your booking. To apply for an accommodation please email bcraver@casact.org.

Exam Experience:

Q: How does CBT change the format and style of questions on CAS Exams MAS-I, MAS-II and 5 - 9?

A: While the CBT environment can allow for more sophisticated test questions and the use of larger datasets in the future, those changes will not be implemented for the Fall 2020 exam. The CAS is focused solely on the transition from paper and pencil to a computer-based delivery format at this time.

The questions on CAS Exams MAS-I, MAS-II and 5 - 9 will be the same as those that would have been asked if the exam had remained a paper and pencil exam; in other words, the questions will be similar in format and style to previous offerings of the same exam.

Q: How can candidates gain comfort with the testing experience prior to their designated test date and time? (Updated September 14, 2020)

A: To prepare candidates for what the exam will look like in the CBT environment, the CAS has released a sample set of exam questions for [MAS-I](#), [MAS-II](#) and [Exams 5-9](#). The CAS has also developed a [CBT Tutorial Video](#) to accompany the sample questions and example solutions for CAS Exams 5-9. The sample questions provide candidates a way to review and familiarize themselves with the functions and features of taking a test in the Pearson VUE testing environment.

Q: How much time is allotted for CAS Exams MAS-I, MAS-II and 5 – 9 in Fall 2020?

A: The scheduled appointment time for the exam is 4.5 hours with 4 hours allocated to answering the exam questions presented. Any necessary reading or reference materials will be embedded in the exam. Please note that a reading period will not be offered in the CBT environment, so candidates are encouraged to allot their time accordingly.

The typical exam breakdown will look like this:

Introduction	2 minutes
Read and agree to the CAS non-disclosure agreement	5 minutes
Examination tutorial	8 minutes
Take examination	4 hours
Complete post exam CAS survey	15 minutes

Q: Why is there no reading period?

A: This is consistent with industry-based standards for computer-based exams. This change will allow candidates to begin answering questions as soon as they see them on the screen.

Q: Can I use scratch paper and do scratch work during the exam? (Updated July 21, 2020)

A: Regular scratch paper, ink pens, or pencils are not allowed.

A [non-erasable spiral notebook](#) will be available to candidates with a fine point felt pen for scratch work. If you need an additional spiral notebook, you can raise your hand and a Pearson VUE representative will provide you with up to two additional notebooks.

Q: Can I use a calculator during the exam? (Updated July 30, 2020)

A: Yes. The following calculators are permitted: BA II Plus, BA II Plus Professional, TI-30X II (IIS solar or IIB battery) or TI-30XS MultiView (or XB battery) models. Candidates should bring their own approved calculators. You may request a calculator at the testing center if you fail to bring one. There is a digital TI-30XS MultiView calculator embedded in the exam for your use during the exam.

Q: What happens if I finish my exam in less than four hours? (Updated July 21, 2020)

A: You may submit the exam as soon as you have finished. A second prompt will ask you to confirm that you are ready to submit. Once you approve submitting the exam, it cannot be accessed again.

Q: Will my work be saved if I run out of time? (Updated July 21, 2020)

A: All answers will be automatically saved. Refer to the demo exam to view the timer location.

Q: What items can I bring into the exam? (Updated July 21, 2020)

A: No personal items may be taken into the testing room except a calculator. This includes all bags, books, notes, phones, writing instruments, watches and wallets. Food and water are prohibited in the exam area.

Helpful Link: [What to expect during your exam](#).

Q: Can I use a spreadsheet function to answer questions and receive full credit? (Updated September 14, 2020)

A: Yes, if you are capable of calculating the correct answer using only the functions of a spreadsheet you will receive full credit.

Q: Can I enter sub and super scripts into the spreadsheet? If not, will there be any required for the exams? (Updated September 14, 2020)

A: Candidates are not able to enter in sub scripts and super scripts in the Pearson VUE spreadsheet. As a result, candidates will not be expected to respond to their exam questions using sub and super scripts. If a candidate chooses to include a subscript or superscript in their response, they can do so by typing r(i) in the case of r^i .

Q: What Excel functions are available in the Pearson spreadsheet environment? (Updated September 14, 2020)

A: See the list of functions [here](#) and on the Pearson VUE/CAS [website](#) under “Related Links.”

Q: Will I need to draw or make graphs for any of the exams? (Updated September 14, 2020)

A: Candidates will not be expected to do any drawing or create any graphs in their responses in the examinations.

Q: Will there be any Integrative Questions (IQs) questions on the exams, or will they be omitted to better fit a computer-based environment? (Updated September 14, 2020)

A: Candidates can expect to see Integrative Questions on Exams 7, 8 and 9.

After the Exam:

Q: Will the Pearson VUE website have my exam results?

A: Pearson VUE will not release any exam results. The CAS expects to release exam results in the first quarter of 2021.

Q: Will partial credit still be provided to candidates?

A: There will be no changes to the way exam questions are graded, except that graders will now be able to consider formulas entered in the Pearson VUE spreadsheets. As has always been the case, candidates are encouraged to show all their work, with partial credit offered for candidates who are able to demonstrate some understanding of the question.

Q: Will there be any changes to the pass marks as a result of the new administration process?

A: While we do not expect any adjustments, per our normal process, we will carefully consider any issues that arise that might indicate whether an adjustment is appropriate.

Q: Will additional details be provided? (Updated November 4, 2020)

A: This FAQ will be updated as additional questions are raised and additional details finalized.

CAS Admissions Leadership hosted a webinar on Monday, July 27th from 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. ET to answer additional questions. [Click here](#) to access the webinar recording.

CAS Admissions Leadership hosted a second webinar on Wednesday, November 28th from 12:00 - 1:00p.m. ET. [Click here](#) to access the webinar recording.

The CAS has also developed a [CBT Tutorial Video](#) to accompany the sample questions and example solutions for CAS Exams 5-9.

Q: Who can I contact with additional questions? (Updated August 21, 2020)

A: Send your additional questions via email to ACS@casact.org. For general information and helpful links, please see [Computer Based Exams Fall 2020](#).

CAS Policy Changes

Q: How do I comment on an item during the exam? (Updated October 6, 2020)

A: If you believe there is an issue with a question being ambiguous or defective, you may use the comment option to alert the exam committee. The exam timer will continue to run while you are typing a comment. You will be given another chance to report defective or ambiguous questions in a survey you will take immediately following the exam. Click [here](#) for a screenshot of this function within the Pearson VUE environment.

Q: Does time spent using the Comment feature count towards my exam time? (Updated October 6, 2020)

A: Yes, the exam clock continues to run while using the Comment feature. Candidates should not spend valuable exam time writing detailed comments and but are encouraged to concisely point out any concerns with an exam item.

Q: What if I think a question is ambiguous? How can I inform the exam committee of this concern? (Updated October 6, 2020)

A: You can use the Comment feature during the exam. Comments will be shared with the exam committee. Also, immediately after the exam you can also use the post-exam questionnaire to provide more details about any exam items. While completing the questionnaire, you will still have access to your notes on the non-erasable notebook but will not be able to see the questions.

Q: What's the difference between the post-exam questionnaire and the post-exam CAS survey? Will they have the same questions? (Updated October 6, 2020)

A: Candidates will have 15-minutes to complete post-exam questionnaire, focusing on the testing experience and questions about the exam at the Pearson VUE test center. The CAS will also publish a survey after all exams have been administered that will include some different questions. Candidates are encouraged to take both surveys to provide feedback on the exam experience.

Q: What information will the new Fail Report contain? (Updated October 6, 2020)

A: The new Fail Report is still under development; details will be shared at a later date.

Q: The Examiner's Report is a valuable study tool. What will the CAS do to replace this? (Updated October 6, 2020)

A: All past exams and Examiner's Reports, from 2019 and prior, will be available to candidates for study purposes, providing a significant number of problems to work through for existing syllabus material. As new material is added to the syllabus, the CAS will publish sample questions and answers to assist candidates in understanding how the new material may be tested on an exam.

Q: Can I discuss the exam with other candidates during the exam window if I'm careful to not tell them what questions are on the exam? (Updated October 6, 2020)

A: No, candidates may not discuss anything about the exam during the exam window.

Q: Can I discuss the exam with other candidates after the exam window? (Updated October 6, 2020)

A: Candidates may discuss the exam in general but may not discuss any specific exam questions. The [Examination Discipline Policy](#) prohibits obtaining or providing exam questions before or after the exam or aiding someone else to do so. Since all questions on the examination are possible questions for the item bank that the CAS is developing and could appear again on a future exam, discussing any exam question after the exam is in violation of this policy.