

Responding to COVID-19: National psychology exam

26 February 2021

Frequently Asked Questions: Information on the dual delivery of the exam

About the format of the NPE exam

The May 2021 sitting of the National Psychology Exam (NPE) will be offered by dual delivery. This means that you will have the option to complete the exam through online proctoring (OLP), or in a designated test centre if this option has been made available in your state/territory as COVID-19 restrictions ease.

Online proctoring (OLP) allows for secure delivery of the exam via the internet in candidates homes or workplaces, and dual-delivery means that you can choose to sit the exam in a test centre (where available) or by OLP.

For online proctored exams, you will be registered to sit the exam at a specific date and time just as you would if sitting the exam in a test centre, however, you will be responsible for organising a suitable exam environment in your home or workplace. You will need to sit your exam in a room on your own that is free from any distraction. You will also need to be equipped with a computer that has a webcam (in-built or external). Your exam will be proctored (supervised) via live webcam.

Registering for exam

How will I know whether I can sit an in-person exam or an online proctored exam in May 2021?

If you wish to sit the exam in May, please go to the [exam portal](#) and make a booking before close of business on 17 April 2021. You will be able to choose whether to sit an online proctored exam or an in-person exam at any of the available test centres across Australia. There will be variable availability to sit an exam in a test centre, depending on COVID-19 restrictions in your area. You will be able to change your registration from sitting in a test centre to OLP (and vice versa) if circumstances change. Please note, you will need to contact nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au to change a registration from OLP to a test centre or from a test centre to OLP.

Please be aware that test centres are privately run and make their own business decisions on whether they can supply the exam. Due to various reasons, including COVID-19 outbreaks, test centres may close at short notice. If this occurs, you will need to decide whether you will undertake the OLP exam or wait until the test centre is open at another exam sitting.

Will the August 2021 exam be delivered in test centres or via online proctoring?

The availability of dual-delivery of the national psychology exam is a temporary response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will update you about the plans for the August 2021 exam as COVID-19 evolves, we know more about the longevity of the relaxation of restrictions, and the situation becomes clearer.

Preparing to sit the online proctored exam

What is online proctoring?

Online proctoring (OLP) is a secure way that exams can be offered remotely via the internet in your home or workplace. The Board's test administrator for the national psychology exam is called Kryterion.

Instead of sitting the exam and being monitored by proctors (invigilators) in a designated test centre, Kryterion delivers the exam directly to your computer and you sit the exam in your home or work place. Kryterion uses certified proctors to monitor candidates in real-time by using video and audio monitoring of the exam as you complete it. OLP uses multiple authentication methods to verify your identity (such as facial recognition and keystroke authentication).

How do I decide whether I should sit the online proctored exam or sit the exam in a test centre?

This is a very personal choice. We understand that some people have never sat an online proctored exam before and are hesitant, while others prefer online proctored exams. We encourage you to consider your own circumstances and seek advice from your supervisor before making your decision.

You may wish to consider the following in making your decision:

- preferred timing to apply for general registration - do you want to apply for general registration sooner, or can you wait until a test centre is open in your area?
- If there is no test centre open in your area (or the test centre closes suddenly due to a COVID-19 hotspot), are you prepared to pivot to the OLP exam, or would you prefer to wait for the next exam period to sit the exam in a test centre?
- do you have access to the required equipment to undertake the OLP exam – e.g. computer, webcam, adequate internet bandwidth? (The FAQ document will help you decide this)
- availability of a suitable OLP exam testing environment (clean, quiet, no interruptions)
- whether you can manage the rules for online proctoring (the FAQ for what to expect during the exam will help you decide this)
- your level of comfort and skill with the technology required to run the OLP exam
- your level of stress and personal/professional commitments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Can I still apply for special accommodation for the online proctored exam?

Yes. Candidates with a documented health condition, mental health condition or disability can request support to provide appropriate assistance to allow them to sit the exam.

Applications for special accommodation requests need to be made in writing to the national exam coordinator at least 30 days in advance of the intended exam date. Please be aware that late applications for special accommodation or applications requesting complex accommodations may not be accepted. If this happens, we will recommend that you sit the exam at the next available scheduled exam sitting. There are four sittings of the exam each year.

More information on special accommodation is in the [national psychology exam candidate manual](#).

What equipment do I need to sit the online proctored exam?

The basic requirements for sitting the online proctored exam are a desktop system or laptop that has an internet connection, with a USB webcam (preferred but not required) or inbuilt webcam and speakers. All exams must be delivered through Microsoft Internet Explorer, Google Chrome or Firefox web browsers.

There are further specific system requirements depending on whether you intend to use a Windows operating system or a Mac. To check whether your computer system meets the software and hardware requirements for OLP examinations, please refer to Kryterion's information on [online testing requirements](#).

You must disable all software that could interfere with your online proctored exam session. This includes, but is not limited to, pop-up blockers, antivirus software, firewalls, VMWare/Bootcamp, Skype, Photobooth and TeamViewer. Please consider this if you intend to use a computer at your workplace as you will often not have permission to disable these features.

Please note that while Kryterion usually requires a webcam for OLP exams, the Board has requested Kryterion modify this requirement (only) for the psychology exam. Candidates are permitted to sit the exam with either an internal camera or a webcam. If you have further queries, use the 'Chat with an Expert' feature located in the bottom right corner of the web-page above.

It is important that all these instructions are followed in order to sit the online proctored exam.

During the examination

What is the role of a proctor during online proctored exams?

The role of the proctor is to ensure the testing environment is secure, to ensure there is a standard testing environment for all candidates, and to ensure that you are not engaging in any non-standard or unauthorised behaviour throughout the exam.

Kryterion uses certified proctors to monitor candidates as you sit the exam. They watch and listen to your every movement using video camera, audio and use multiple authentication methods (such as facial recognition and keystroke authentication) to ensure your identity.

Proctors will conduct ID checks. These can occur before or after the exam has commenced. If conducted during the exam, the proctor will pause your exam whilst checking your ID so you will not be penalised time wise. Some candidates may find this interruption distracting; however, it is necessary for the delivery of online exams.

Proctors will only communicate with exam candidates using onscreen messaging.

The proctor can issue warnings, suspend, or in cases where they believe intentional unauthorised exam behaviour is taking place, can terminate your exam.

What if I have a technical issue during the online proctored exam?

Technical issues have previously occurred during the online proctored exam, due to one of three causes:

- Connection disruptions because of the candidate's equipment
- Connection disruptions because the candidate's internet connection is unstable.
- Connection disruptions from Kryterion's servers.

If this occurs, support staff from Kryterion will be available to you on the day to assist in resolving your technical issue. You will be able to contact Kryterion through [online chat](#) via the 'chat with an expert' feature.

It is recommended that candidates sit the OLP exam early in the exam period so that in rare cases when an exam needs to be re-scheduled, an early exam sitting will allow candidates to re-schedule the exam within the same exam period if necessary.

Please see the 'after the exam' section in this document for further information about suspended or terminated exams.

What if I leave the area?

You are not allowed to leave your testing area without permission from your proctor. If you leave the testing area during your exam without permission, or you leave your exam for longer than five minutes your exam will be terminated.

You may ask your proctor to go to the toilet if you need to. You must return to your testing area within five minutes. If you leave the testing area to go to the toilet you will not be given any additional time to complete your exam. One toilet break per exam is permitted.

What if I lean out of view of the camera?

You will be advised that you are out of view of the camera and told to reposition yourself as you are moving outside of the camera view. Use the live video to ensure you always stay within the camera view. Your exam will be terminated if you lean out of the view repeatedly.

What if the camera is out of position?

You will be advised that your OLP exam has been interrupted because your camera is out of position. We must always be able to see your face.

What if the camera is out of focus?

You will be advised to use your live display to refocus the camera and your exam will be suspended until your image is clear.

What if there is an audio problem?

You will be advised that your exam has been interrupted because there is a problem with your audio and advice will be provided accordingly.

What if there is a video/camera signal problem?

You will be advised that your exam has been interrupted because there is a problem with your video signal. A technician or the proctor will provide appropriate advice to correct the issue. If the technical problems persist the proctor may terminate the exam. If this happens a new exam session will be organised for you.

What if lighting is not adequate?

You will be advised that your exam has been interrupted because of poor lighting in your testing area (either too light or too dark). You must use your live video display to make the necessary adjustments and your exam will be suspended until your lighting is adequate.

Can I talk to the proctor about the exam?

You may communicate with your proctor via onscreen messaging during the exam if you wish to go to the toilet, if you are having technical difficulties with the exam delivery, or if you need to terminate the exam due to ill health or an emergency (e.g. fire alarm). The proctor will only communicate with exam candidates using onscreen messaging.

You are not permitted to talk about the content of the exam (e.g. exam questions) with anybody (including the proctor) during or after the exam.

You may not talk to the proctor about non-exam related topics.

Can I talk to other people during the exam?

No. Talking to other people is not allowed during the exam. This includes talking about the exam or talking about non-exam related topics.

If you talk during the exam you will be advised to discontinue talking or your exam will be suspended.

When you set up your testing area, you must ensure that there will be no interruptions from children, colleagues or animals/pets during your exam.

Can I read aloud during the exam?

You are not permitted to read the exam out loud. You will be advised to please refrain from reading the test items out loud. If you continue to read out loud your exam will be terminated.

Can I have anything with me during the exam?

Your desk and testing area must be completely clear of paper, pens/pencils and any other clutter.

You are not permitted to have any learning aids in the exam.

You are not permitted to wear noise cancelling headphones during the testing. This is because the proctor is unable to monitor if someone is communicating with you via the headset.

If you have any electronic devices in addition to your computer in the testing room (e.g. phone, ipad) they must be turned off or removed from the testing room.

If you wear eye glasses, you will be asked to remove your glasses and show them to the camera before commencing the exam.

You may have a clear bottle of water with you during the exam

Can there be multiple people in the room during my exam?

There must be no other people in the room where the exam is taking place.

How should I set up my environment during the exam?

Your testing area must be clear of any paper, electronic devices, post it notes etc. Before your exam starts you will be asked to pan the room with your camera/ laptop so the area can be checked. Your exam may be terminated if you are found to have any unauthorized materials in the room. A minimum area of 30 centimetres on either side of the keyboard must be clear.

Can I copy, save, photograph or remove any test item / text?

No, you are not allowed to photograph, record, copy or write down any of the test items or questions.

After the exam

Will I be able to provide feedback to the Board about my experience sitting the online proctored exam?

Yes. There will be a candidate survey after the exam where you can provide us feedback.

What do I do if my exam was suspended or terminated?

Please write to the nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au inbox immediately if your exam was suspended or terminated. A member of the Ahpra exams team will contact you and review the circumstances that prompted the suspension or termination of your exam.

If your exam was suspended or terminated due to technical difficulties (e.g. a problem with your audio or video signal) or ended because you were feeling unwell during the exam, you will be able to re-sit the exam at the end of the exam period.

If your exam was suspended or terminated because you did not observe the rules and requirements of the testing environment, and the online proctor reports that you engaged in non-standard and/or unauthorised behaviour during the exam, you will need approval from the Board before being able to re-sit the exam

When will I receive my results?

Candidates will receive their exam results by email within four weeks of the close of the exam period. Results will state whether you passed or failed. No further detail about results will be provided.

I have further questions about my exam?

Please email nationalpsychologyexam@ahpra.gov.au .

When a question is asked that would benefit all candidates, we will add the question and answer to these FAQ's.