

The Prometric Center Experience for SOA Written-Answer Exams

Updated December 19, 2023

Exam Timing

- Once seated at your designated Prometric workstation, you will have approximately 10 minutes prior to the start of the exam to read through an instructional tutorial on navigation, and saving and submitting your files (if required).
- A clock on your computer screen will display the time you have remaining for the exam. The clock will start to count down when you click “Start the Test.”
- Once you start the test, the clock cannot be paused.
- After time expires (or you click “Finish Test”) if there are files to upload, there will be a 5-minute period during which you must upload your files for grading.
- There is no specifically designated read-through time or break time.
- You may take breaks at any time after you click on “Start the Test.” The clock will continue to count down during any break you choose to take. All applicable Prometric security guidelines will apply if you exit the main exam room to take a break.

During the Exam

- You will use Microsoft Word and/or Excel to construct your responses (Prometric computers will have the 2016 versions of Word and Excel). For some exams, some or all of your answers will be written in an answer booklet provided to you. See information later in this document on which Word and Excel features will be available. Some exams may elect to use only Word or only Excel. If so, that will be made clear at the exam.
- The exam questions and any case studies, formula sheets, tables and/or other material will be provided as PDF files.
- For an exam where answers are to be submitted in Word, the exam questions will be repeated in the Word document that will also hold the responses.
- The Excel file may be pre-loaded with data.
- You will not receive hard copies of the exam questions.
- You will be provided with scratch paper,¹ which will be handed in to a Prometric center administrator and shredded.
- Each exam will have specific instructions for providing responses. For example, an exam could instruct you to provide written explanations in the Word document and calculations in the Excel file.
- You will submit your completed Word and Excel files, if any, electronically via the Prometric submission portal.
- Prior to uploading your Word and Excel files, each file should be saved and renamed with your five-digit candidate number in the filename.

¹ Some exams will require the use of a paper answer booklet at Prometric centers – see Exams with Special Arrangements below.

A **demo video** simulating the exam environment you will experience at the Prometric testing center is available on your exam home page.

[Learn more about what to expect](#) at Prometric centers.

Availability of Word and Excel Features in Prometric Testing Environment

1. Candidates will be able to copy and paste between Word and Excel and vice versa, including pasting cells from Excel into Word as a table.
2. A search function will be available within the PDF reader
3. There is a file size limit of 25MB per file.
4. Analysis-ToolPak in Excel will not be available.
5. Solver in Excel will not be available.
6. Goal Seek in Excel will be available.
7. Pivot tables in Excel will be available. Candidates are free to use them (as they can use any available function in Excel) at any time. For the Spring 2024 exam administration, no exam questions will contain pivot tables, nor will the questions be written with an assumption that using pivot tables will be advantageous. For subsequent exams, the syllabus document will make it clear if pivot tables are necessary or advantageous. If so, at least one sample question will be provided.
8. Candidates will not have access to Help in Excel and Word.
9. The Windows snipping tool will not be available.
10. Certain short-cut keys will be disabled. See below for the full list.

The following shortcut keys will *not* be available

ALT - F4 Down	CTRL - P Down
ALT - F4 Up	CTRL - P Up
ALT - Space Down	CTRL -ESC Down
ALT - Space Up	CTRL- ESC Up
ALT -ESC Down	CTRL-ALT-DEL
ALT- ESC Up	CTRL-ESC
ALT -Tab Down	CTRL-N
ALT- Tab Up	CTRL-SHIFT-N
ALT-ESC	F1
ALT-F4	F1 Down
ALT-Space	F1 Up
ALT-TAB	F11
Application/Context Menu	F11 Down
Application Down	F11 Up
Application Up	F3
CTRL - B Down	Left WIN Down
CTRL - B Up	Left WIN Up
CTRL - L Down	Right WIN Down
CTRL - L Up	Right WIN Up
CTRL - N Down	Shift - F10 Down
CTRL - N Up	Shift - F10 Up
CTRL - O Down	Shift - F10
CTRL - O Up	Windows keys (both)

Exams with Special Arrangements

Three exams have been identified as exceptions needing special arrangements due to infrastructure requirements to securely capture unique hand-written calculations, figures, and graphs. Until an appropriate mechanism can be implemented the following assessment methods will be used.

Advanced Long-Term Actuarial Mathematics (ALTAM) and Advanced Short-Term Actuarial Mathematics (ASTAM) exams

ALTAM and ASTAM will be administered at Prometric test centers. The exam questions will be displayed on the computer. Some of the questions are to be answered in a paper answer booklet to be provided and collected by Prometric and some of the questions will be answered in the Excel workbook.

- For the questions to be answered in the paper answer booklet candidates may use the Excel Tables (ALTAM), and may use Excel for general calculations (both exams), but only the answers provided in the exam answer booklet will be graded. Candidates should record all their answers in their answer booklets and should also give sufficient information on the formulas and methods used to allow graders to award partial credit where appropriate.
- For the questions to be answered in the Excel workbook, only the information provided in the Excel workbook will be graded.

Paper versions of the exam and tables will not be provided. Candidates will be provided with a scratchpad.

- For ALTAM, tables will be provided in the exam in an Excel workbook.
- For ASTAM, tables will not be provided. Instead, candidates will be expected to use Excel to calculate probabilities and quantiles from common distributions.

At the end of the exam, candidates will upload their Excel workbook for grading of the Excel questions and will turn in their exam answer booklets to Prometric staff to be forwarded to the SOA for grading of the questions answered in the answer booklets.

QFI Quantitative Finance Exam

The QFI Quantitative Finance Exam will be administered at Prometric test centers. Candidates will submit hand-written answers to select questions in a paper answer booklet to be provided and collected by Prometric for some questions and will enter answers electronically for other questions.

Please send any questions to customerservice@soa.org.