

ICAZ CIRCULAR TO TRAINING OFFICES: 2017 APC E-Writing Pilot Project

Introduction

From 2018 onwards ICAZ APC students will write their assessments using e-writing. This circular is to explain to training offices what e-writing is about and also to highlight anticipated changes for training offices. In preparation for this change ICAZ will be running a pilot e-writing in 2017 for a limited number of students. This change is in line with changes at SAICA which has already piloted e-writing in 2015 and 2016 examinations.

Objective

The objective of this circular is to explain how e-writing works and provide an operational plan on how ICAZ will run the Pilot Project on e-writing in 2017.

What is eWriting?

This is an option for candidates eligible for the November APC to write the Assessment on their own Laptop Computers using software called SecureExam. Instead of manually writing their assessment responses, candidates will be required to type in their responses on their laptop in word and spreadsheets formats. The pre-release information, information on the day and the required will still be manual documents.

Cost

For the pilot program ICAZ expects a marginal increase for all APC candidates whether or not they have opted for e-writing to cover the additional costs.

Option to e-write

Candidates will have to indicate their willingness to e-write during the initial months of the APT APC course so that:

- They can download the SecureExam software.
- Register for the software
- Practice using the software before the first APT Assessment normally in June 2016.
- Write all APT Assessments on their Laptop Computers using the software.
- Each candidate will be issued with an individual licence which will be valid for the year's assessments only.

If a candidate elects to participate in eWriting, they will write both APT Assessments and the ICAZ APC on their Laptop?

Will the Software work on any Laptop?

1. The Software will work on Windows™ based machines only.
2. If candidates are using a laptop provided by the employer, there is a strong probability that the Firm's Security Software will block installing SecureExam.
3. Each candidate will need to approach their Firm's IT Support about this, (ICAZ plan is to reach agreement with all firms about this aspect and, therefore, hope that all Firms will agree)
4. Once downloaded and installed, the software will work only on the computer on which it has been installed.
5. Reinstallation is a simple, but necessary process should a candidate receive a new computer during the year.

What if a candidate Register for eWriting and then decide to write the assessments manually?

Students would be allowed to write manually although, because ICAZ would have paid for the software licence, ICAZ would charge an additional fee when the candidate register for the APC in November.

How does the Software work?

1. During the period between the download and registration of the software and 1st assessment in June, the software will allow candidate to test the software by providing them with 2 "Dummy Exams"
2. On the day of an Assessment:
 - a. The only difference between eWriting and completing the assessment manually is that the candidate will complete their responses (solutions) on their laptop.
 - b. They will report to the Assessment Venue with a Laptop and a blank USB Drive. The USB drive will be used for back up. Note that Removable Hard drives are not allowed.
 - c. At the start of the assessment, the Invigilators will provide the candidate with a Password that will enable them to activate the software. The software will then open a specific time-encoded "exam book" for the day.
 - d. Once activated, the software will block access to:
 - i. Any other software on your laptop.
 - ii. All Internet communication
 - iii. Access to all drives.
 - e. Whilst the software will create backups of work on the USB drive, the candidate will not, have access to the drive.
 - f. Note that an implication of this is that work done in the Pre Release period needs to be in Hard Copy in the Lever Arch File as they will not have access to any electronic media (The content of this file may not be more than 8cm thick).

- g. The software will give the candidate access to two documents and only those two documents:
 - i. An MSWord equivalent; and
 - ii. An Excel equivalent.
 - h. They will then receive the Information on the Day and the Requirements in Hard Copy and commence preparing responses in the two files, using the MSWord equivalent for text responses and the Excel equivalent for more calculative responses.
3. At the end of the assessment the candidate will be required to shut down SecureExam and the Invigilator will give a second Password to enable this.
 4. When they shut SecureExam down, the software will transfer all responses (solutions) to an encrypted file on the Desktop.
 5. They will be given instructions concerning the upload of this encrypted file to a File Server.
 6. They will not be able to read this file because of the encryption. (This is conceptually similar to having “handed in your examination book(s)”, after which the candidate does not have access to the “books”.)
 7. Markets will read the encrypted file and create a PDF of your solution.
 8. There is no internet needed during the exam. Students can upload their solutions at their offices or at home.