

FAQ – Exams

How are the exams administered?

All CGCS exams are administered online through software designed for test-taking. You will be able to log into the testing software using the links provided to you upon application approval. Once you are logged in, you will have the option to schedule your exams. To take your exams, you will log in again at the scheduled time and begin your exam. The testing software will provide a trained proctor from outside of GCSAA to monitor all exams.

Who is the online proctor? What do they do?

The proctors are trained professionals provided by the exam software company and are unaffiliated with GCSAA. First, the proctor will perform security checks – verifying your ID and examining your testing environment. Then, the proctor will lock your device and begin your exam. Devices are only “locked” to prevent candidates from navigating away from an active exam, and the proctor will not have access to the contents of your device. The proctor will continue to monitor you and your screen throughout the exam and report any suspicious behaviors to GCSAA. At the end of the exam, the proctor will release your device and advise you on how to end the exam.

What system requirements do I need to take the exams?

You will need a laptop or desktop computer with a webcam, microphone, and a stable internet connection. The device will need to have a Windows, macOS, or ChromeOS operating system (no tablets/cell phones).

Is there a way to test the software in advance?

Yes, you can use the “CGCS Sample Items” test to familiarize yourself with the testing software and to ensure your device meets the system requirements.

Do I need anything else?

You will need to bring and present an official, current, government-issued ID (driver’s license, passport, etc.). The name on your ID must be an exact match with the name on file with GCSAA/on your membership card. If necessary, please contact cgcs@gcsaa.org to update the name we have on file.

What optional items can I have with me during the test? What items are not allowed?

You are allowed to have:

- A simple calculator
- A piece of scratch paper
- Unmarked water bottle
- External mouse

You are not allowed to have:

- Books, notes, or other supplementary materials
- Snacks
- Cell phones, smart watches, or other electronic devices (medical devices excluded)

How does the proctor prevent candidates from cheating?

Prior to the start of the examination, the proctor will ask you to show them the room via your webcam to check your surrounding environment, including any objects in your workspace. Your device will be locked by the proctor to prevent you from accessing anything other than the exam. The exam session will be monitored by a live proctor via webcam and microphone, and any suspicious activity will be reported to GCSAA and is subject to investigation.

What do I do if I'm unable to log in with my name and email address?

Ensure you're using the same email address on file with GCSAA and your full, legal name as it appears on your ID. If problem persists, please contact cgcs@gcsaa.org.

What do I do if I have system problems? What do I do if my exam doesn't launch at the scheduled time? What if I have other technical problems?

Please contact the exam delivery service technical support team by calling +1(435) 395-8313. Regardless of if the issue is resolved or not, please notify cgcs@gcsaa.org of the problem at your convenience.

Will I be able to go back and edit my answers?

Yes, you will be able to see and edit your previous responses before submitting your exam.

How will I know if I passed or failed? What is a passing score?

You will immediately receive a pass/fail result at the end of each exam. GCSAA does not disclose the passing for any of the CGCS exams. Each passing score was determined by an expert through a standardized process. Complexity of the content, the desired level of competency, and the performance of beta-testers were all taken into consideration when the passing scores were determined.

How does retaking the exam work?

For each exam section, you will have three attempts to pass. If you are unable to attend at the scheduled time, you are responsible for cancelling the attempt in advance. A failure or “no-show” will count against you, and you will need to retake the exam. When you retake an exam, you will have to retake the entirety of the section. Retakes must be scheduled at least seven days after your last attempt. Failure to pass any exam section within three attempts will result in rejection from the program and you will enter a 30-day waiting period to reapply.

Do I have to take the exams online?

Exceptions are only made under extenuating circumstances/hardship situations. Requests for a paper examination must be reviewed by the CGCS Certification Manager on a case-by-case basis. The applicant is responsible for requesting a paper examination. If the request is approved, the applicant is then responsible for obtaining a GCSAA-approved proctor, scheduling the examination time with the proctor, and for any expenses incurred.

For international applicants:**English is not my first language. Am I able to use a translator?**

Foreign applicants are entitled to use a translator. Any associated costs are the applicant's responsibility. The translator is only allowed to translate the questions and answers; the translator is not allowed to interpret the question or provide any additional information.

Do I need to know the Imperial system?

No – both measurement systems (Imperial and Metric) will be displayed on any relevant questions/answers.