Online examinations 2020

Suspended 2020 Inspectors’ exam frequently asked questions

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# Why did you decide to suspend the Inspectors’ exam?

The Inspectors’ NPPF Step Two Legal Examination was scheduled to take place between 0800 and 2000 on the 13th October 2020. We opened the exam to candidates at 0800 and just after 1000, we were made aware that a significant number of candidates were encountering technical issues accessing the exam. This included many candidates encountering extremely slow functionality and questions taking a significant time to buffer.

As soon as we were alerted to the issues, we worked with our exam platform supplier, PSI, to understand and address the issues experienced by candidates. Our supplier initially thought this issue could be overcome by extending the platform server capacity and that the exam could continue as planned. However, we were subsequently informed that there was a wider issue, which was not specific to the College exam and was affecting exam delivery across a number of organisations, including exams being run across the Civil Service.

Despite assurances, we were unable to be fully confident that candidates would not continue to be adversely affected. Due to the impact on colleagues, we took the decision to suspend the exam sitting. We apologise for the stress and anxiety caused by this and are working hard to minimise further impact on colleagues.

# What happens now…?

We are attempting to reduce further impact on candidates as much as possible. There are different scenarios based on the candidate’s level of completion. See the attached PDF diagram for further details.

# I have managed to complete the exam, when will I get my result?

We recognise that some candidates were able to complete the exam despite the adverse conditions. All sufficiently completed exams will be marked and results reviewed by the debrief panel in the normal way. We intend to accelerate this process in order to advise candidates of the outcome early next week (w/c 19th October).

Colleagues who completed the exam but who have not passed will have the option to sit the examination again when it is rescheduled in the coming weeks.

# I didn’t complete the exam, what does this mean for me?

For those candidates who managed to log out of the system, all progress up to that point will have been saved.

We will mark the exams of all candidates who partially completed the exam and answered enough questions to make it possible to pass. On ratification of the results, if you have completed a sufficient amount of the exam successfully to pass, you will not need to continue with your exam or redo it.

If you were unable to complete the examination sufficiently, you will be able to continue to sit the exam once it is rescheduled. Alternatively, you will be able to restart the exam from the beginning if you prefer.

Once you have completed the exam fully, if you are unsuccessful, you will also get the option to redo the exam again in a second round of rescheduled exams in the coming weeks.

# Can I start the rescheduled exam from the point I finished?

Yes, if you logged out during the exam the system will have captured your question number and time and you will be able to log-on and, if you wish, you will be able to resume your exam at that point on the rescheduled date.

# I didn’t start the exam, what does this mean for me?

You will be able to sit the exam when it is rescheduled. If you are unsuccessful in this attempt, you will also have the option to sit the examination again in a second round of rescheduled exams in the coming weeks.

# When will the Inspectors’ exam be rescheduled?

We recognise the urgency of rescheduling the exam to avoid any loss of knowledge or further disruption. We are working with our supplier and forces to identify a range of suitable dates in the coming weeks. We will be offering a number of dates to allow candidates options to fit the rescheduled exam around work and other commitments.

We are intending to confirm these dates early next week (w/c 19th October).

# Can anyone attend the rescheduled exam?

Only candidates who were registered for the Inspectors’ NPPF Step Two Legal Examination scheduled for Tuesday the 13th October 2020 will be eligible to sit on the rescheduled dates.

# I’ve spent money to prepare for the Inspectors’ exam, will the College reimburse me for this?

We understand that candidates have put in an extraordinary amount of work in preparation for the exam and will have unique and individual considerations that the suspension of the exam will have caused.

We are extremely sorry for the stress and anxiety this has caused. We are exploring other support in respect of the wider impact on candidates’ personal circumstances. We will provide further information on this as soon as possible.

My pass in the Inspectors’ exam was due to expire this year. Is my previous pass in the NPPF Inspectors’ exam still valid even though I took the exam?

The College and the NPPF Governance Board appreciate the challenges that forces have faced this year in regards to their promotion processes. All candidates who sat the 2015 Inspectors’ NPPF Step Two Legal Exam had their validity period extended until 31st December 2020. We advised that if a candidate holding a pass in the 2015 Inspectors’ NPPF Step Two Legal Exam took the 2020 Inspectors’ exam they would forfeit this validity extension at the time of taking the exam and would not be eligible to take part in a Step Three process until they had received their results and were successful in the 2020 Inspectors’ exam. We would like to reassure you that we will take this into account when exploring what action to take next and ensure that candidates are not unfairly penalised.

# How will you provide candidates with updates about the exam?

We will continue to update this Q&A as further information becomes available. We will also continue to contact candidates directly by email, update forces and provide information via or website and social media.

# How will you ensure this does not happen again?

We are conducting a full review with our exam platform supplier, PSI, to ensure we understand the exact problems they have experienced and fully assure ourselves that candidates will not experience these issues again in future online exams.

# Will the Sergeants’ exam go ahead?

We advise all candidates to continue to prepare for the exam as planned. We are undertaking urgent work to ensure candidates will not experience IT issues during the exam. While we will do everything possible to avoid disruption, we may need to take some mitigating actions to ensure smooth delivery. We will provide an update to all candidates as early as possible next week (w/c 19 October 2020).

# Will the same questions be used in the future exam?

Our priority is to ensure fairness to officers and the integrity of the exam. All exams will continue to draw from the same bank of questions.

# There was a glitch where some answers could not be selected. Is this being resolved?

We are aware that some candidates were unsure which answer they selected/if they selected an answer at all for two questions in the exam. This only occurred for candidates completing the exam on a small screen or a device with less than optimal compatibility with the exam platform browser. Candidates using a larger screen or compatible browser will have been able to see and select their answers using the buttons next to the question options as intended.

We will resolve this for new attempts at the exam. However, we are unable to resolve this to any attempts which are partially completed as we cannot alter an exams content or settings once it has been accessed by a candidate.

We can reassure affected candidates that you will have provided a response to these questions as the platform does not allow you to move to the next question without doing so. However, we are aware that candidates may not know which answer they selected and were unable to check this during their exam. We are unable to check or add these for you because all exam questions and options were randomised.

For candidates who decide to start their exam from the start, these issues will be resolved. For candidates wishing to re-access their exam from where they were left, we recommend using a device with a larger screen so that you can see the buttons at the side of the questions or clicking onto the answer you wish to select before moving on. For further information please consult our [technical support page](https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Professional-Training/Investigation/Pages/exam-day-support.aspx).

# Will the pass mark remain the same?

The NPPF Debrief Panel, which includes representatives from within the service, makes all final decisions on pass marks to ensure consistency and fairness. We will be recommending to the Panel that the pass mark should remain the same across all the exam attempts to ensure consistency. We will be in a position to confirm if any changes to this position following the meeting of the Debrief Panel early next week (w/c 19 October 2020).

# The time on the exam still counted down even though it could not be accessed

The timer should have paused for candidates during the buffering. However, if you do not think this was the case, we would recommend that you choose to start your exam again from the beginning to ensure you receive the full time allocated to you for the exam. We cannot add extra time to candidates’ current attempts as the exam platform does not allow us to alter the settings of an exam which is in progress.

# Can I submit an appeal when I know my result from my attempt on Tuesday, 13 October?

We understand that the incidents caused significant distress and worry to candidates and have offered candidates a way forward to allow another attempt at the exam. On this basis, we will not be accepting individual appeals from candidates in relation to the incidents that occurred on Tuesday 13th October 2020. Further details about how to raise an appeal in other circumstances can be found in the Candidate Handbook.

# Will I get extra time if I carry on with my exam to allow for the buffering/connectivity issues I explained?

We cannot add extra time to a candidates who has partially completed their exam as the platform does not allow us to alter the settings of an exam which is in progress. We also have no way of knowing how much time an individual candidate has lost due to buffering or connectivity issues. Therefore, we have offered candidates a chance to resume their exam from where they were and/or a chance to attempt the exam again from the beginning.

# Will I be told how well I have done on the questions I have completed so far?

We will only be marking the exams of candidates who have sufficiently completed the exam to enable them to pass.  We will advise candidates of the outcome of this early next week (w/c 19th October). Colleagues who have not achieved a pass will have the option to continue or restart the exam.

Candidates who have not completed a sufficient amount of the exam in order to reach a pass will not be marked and have the option to continue or restart the exam.

# How can I check the status of my exam? Did I finish?

We can check this for you if you email your candidate number to [NPPF.Enquiries@college.pnn.police.uk](mailto:NPPF.Enquiries@college.pnn.police.uk)

# I finished my exam but it was oast 8pm, will this still be marked?

Yes, we will include all candidates in the marking process who completed their exam even if they were unable to complete it before the original exam window closed at 8pm.

# How will you make sure the integrity of the exam remains?

We expect all officers to act with integrity and in line with the principles and standards of behaviour as set out within the Code of Ethics and to not try to gain an unfair advantage in the exam by any means. The design of the exams and mechanisms that we have introduced into the delivery of the exam mean that attempts to cheat are likely to be ineffective. Any candidate who is suspected of cheating or disclosing the content of the exam in any way will be investigated and could have their exam results nullified and/or be banned from entering the exam in future. Candidates suspected of cheating will also be referred to their force’s Professional Standards Unit.

**About the College**

We’re the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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