

Saras – Record and Review Remote Invigilation Guidance

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1. Introduction

This guide provides learners and centre staff with essential information regarding remotely invigilated assessments on the Saras platform. VTCT Skills delivers Remote Invigilation using the Record and Review (R&R) method. R&R Remote Invigilation is a chargeable service where a learner is invigilated via video and audio whilst undertaking their assessment. This enables VTCT Skills reviewers to assess a recording of the learner's assessment after completion, verifying that assessment requirements and examination conditions were maintained throughout. This also enables learners to take their assessments from home and provides greater flexibility as to when the learner can take their assessment.

R&R Remote Invigilation is an optional modality of invigilation; it does not replace the traditional method of centre invigilated assessments.

Before deciding to schedule an assessment for R&R Remote Invigilation, centres must ensure that learners have read all information and guidance provided by VTCT Skills relating to R&R Remote Invigilation. It is important that learners fully understand the requirements and can adhere to exam conditions for the duration of the assessment.

Whilst this document contains information for both centres and learners, centres must ensure they are fully aware of all information contained in this document.

2. Part A – Information for centres

2.1. Before choosing R&R Remote Invigilation

R&R Remote Invigilation is an additional and optional assessment delivery method. Before scheduling a R&R remotely invigilated assessment, the centre and learner should ensure that:

- the learner has a suitable device, camera, microphone and reliable internet connection (please see the minimum system requirements contained in this document)
- the learner can complete the assessment alone in a suitable private room
- any approved reasonable adjustments can be supported through R&R Remote Invigilation
- the learner has suitable photographic identification
- the learner has read and understood this guidance and is aware they should complete the mock exam prior to their live assessment.

If these requirements cannot be met, the centre should consider an alternative assessment delivery method.

To support safeguarding requirements, centres must obtain consent from a parent or guardian before scheduling a R&R Remote Invigilation assessment for any learner under the age of 16.

2.2. Reasonable adjustments

Approved reasonable adjustments continue to apply to R&R remotely invigilated assessments where they are compatible with the R&R Remote Invigilation delivery method and can be supported by Saras.

Centres must check that a learner's approved reasonable adjustments can be accommodated **before scheduling the assessment for R&R Remote Invigilation.**

Adjustments such as additional time or supported display settings may be compatible with R&R Remote Invigilation where available. Adjustments requiring another person to be present, additional equipment or arrangements that conflict with R&R Remote Invigilation conditions may require an alternative assessment delivery method.

2.3. Privacy/recording

Record and Review Remote Invigilation involves the collection and recording of the learner's photographic identification, identity image, assessment room, webcam footage, audio and assessment screen.

These recordings are used to confirm that assessment conditions have been maintained and to protect the security and integrity of the assessment.

Recordings will only be accessible to authorised personnel and will be retained for 90 days after which they will be securely deleted. The personnel reviewing recordings are trained in

assessment regulations, identifying malpractice, and following safeguarding and escalation procedures where concerns arise.

Further information about how personal information is processed is available in the [VTCT Skills Privacy Policy](#).

2.4. Fees

Centres should be aware that R&R Remote Invigilation carries an additional fee per assessment attempt, this fee is incurred upon a learner starting a R&R remotely invigilated exam. If a R&R remotely invigilated schedule is created but the assessment is not started, no charge for R&R Remote Invigilation will be incurred.

2.5. Scheduling an assessment for R&R Remote Invigilation

2.5.1. Scheduling timeframes

R&R Remotely invigilated assessments must be scheduled at least 30 minutes before the assessment is due to take place. Once an assessment has been scheduled for R&R Remote Invigilation, learners can log in to the Saras platform and complete a mock exam. The mock exam replicates the remote assessment process and allows learners to familiarise themselves with the assessment environment, system checks, identity verification requirements, and the use of the LockDown Browser before their live assessment. The mock exam will not impact the learner's results.

We strongly recommend that centres schedule R&R remotely invigilated assessments as far in advance as possible. This gives learners sufficient time to review the guidance, install and test the LockDown Browser, and complete the mock exam. Completing these steps in advance helps to ensure a smooth assessment experience and reduces the risk of technical or procedural issues on the day of the assessment.

2.5.2. Creating the schedule

The process of scheduling a R&R remotely invigilated assessment is extremely similar to scheduling a centre invigilated assessment. The assessment is scheduled via the Saras platform and when creating the schedule, a tick box will be available to select if the exam is going to be remotely invigilated. If the tick box is not visible, the assessment may not be available for R&R Remote Invigilation.

When selecting learners for the exam schedule, the email field will be editable for each learner. Entering a learner's email address in this field will trigger an email notification is sent, confirming their scheduled remotely invigilated exam.

Upon saving the schedule, centre staff will need to liaise with the learner to ensure they are aware of their log in details to the Saras platform. Learners should also be made aware that once they have received their log in details from the centre, they can log in to Saras and attempt the mock exam.

2.5.3. Email notification

Once a learner is scheduled for a R&R remotely invigilated assessment, an email notification will be sent to the learner provided their email address was populated at the point of scheduling. This email will confirm the assessment that has been scheduled along with the date and start time of the assessment.

The email content will include useful information such as the link to the Saras Test Player and a prompt to complete the mock exam.

The learners Saras login details will not be included in the email content; therefore, centres will need to ensure that learners are aware of their log in details to the Saras platform.

2.6. Post assessment

2.6.1. Invigilation footage review

Upon completion of the learner's exam, the learner's photos of themselves and their ID, the video of their room scan, the video of their webcam footage and screen recording will be submitted to VTCT Skills. A team of reviewers will then review the invigilation footage to either confirm the validity of the assessment or escalate any flagged behaviours for further investigation. Should there be any missing footage in the recording, this will also be escalated for further investigation and may lead to the void of the assessment. Any confirmed instances of malpractice, or attempts to compromise the integrity of the assessment, may result in sanctions being applied, including the suspension of access to remotely invigilated assessments in the future.

2.6.2. Void policy

VTCT Skills will void an assessment where the security, validity, integrity or fairness of the assessment has been compromised following any of the above flags being identified during the assessment.

Where an assessment is declared void following a R&R Remote Invigilation review, the centre will be notified of this outcome. Centres, acting on behalf of a learner, have the right to appeal this decision. The process, application form and associated costs are detailed in VTCT Skills' Enquiries About Results and Appeals Policy and Procedures.

2.6.3. Results

Results for automatically marked R&R remotely invigilated assessments will be released within 5 working days from completion of the assessment. Should there be any flagged behaviours that require further investigation, it may be necessary to hold the result for longer whilst the investigation is concluded.

Results will be made available to the centre via Saras and not shared directly with the learner.

3. Part B – Information for learners

3.1. System requirements

3.1.1. Minimum system requirements

Saras has been designed to operate within modern, secure and supported technical environments. Meeting the minimum requirements will help ensure optimal performance, security and reliability.

Learners must review the information below carefully and ensure their device is suitable to sit a R&R remotely invigilated assessment. If the learner's device does not meet the minimum and supporting specifications, they will be unable to sit the assessment on the device. Centres are responsible for ensuring learners have the required equipment to sit a R&R remotely invigilated assessment; therefore, learners should liaise with their centre if their device does not meet the requirements.

Technology	Minimum and supporting specifications
Operating System	Windows 10 and above / MacOS 15.6.1 and above
Camera	Minimum of 2 mega pixels
Microphone	Integrated only
Screen Resolution	1368 x 769 or higher
Memory	Minimum: 8GB RAM
Free Hard Disk Space	Minimum of 5GB of available hard disk space throughout the duration of the assessment
Bandwidth*	5 mbps
Browsers**	Latest versions of Chrome and Edge Respondus LockDown Browser version Lab OEM-2.11.005

* VTCT Skills would strongly recommend the use of a wired/stable internet connection for R&R remotely invigilated assessments to provide increased reliability.

** Learners are required to download and install the Respondus LockDown Browser to take an exam. Learners will log in to the exam platform via Chrome or Edge and upon starting the exam, the Respondus LockDown Browser will launch.

The Respondus LockDown Browser can be downloaded and installed via the links below.

[LockDown Browser for Windows](#)

[LockDown Browser for MacOS](#)

Once the LockDown Browser is installed, learners can log in to Saras via the link below.

<https://assessments.vtctskills.org.uk/TNA/testplayer>

3.1.2. Using a workplace or centre-managed device

Learners using an employer, college or other organisation managed device or network should be aware that security settings, firewalls, VPNs, proxy servers or restrictions on installing software may prevent R&R Remote Invigilation from working correctly.

Learners should complete the mock assessment using **the same device and internet connection that they intend to use for the live assessment**.

If the LockDown Browser cannot be installed or the system check cannot be completed successfully, the issue must be resolved before the assessment is started.

3.2. The assessment room

3.2.1. Other people

Learners must complete the assessment alone in a private room where they can remain free from interruptions for the entire duration of the exam. If a suitable room cannot be secured, the learner should not attempt to sit the assessment remotely.

No other person may enter or remain in the assessment room at any time during the exam. If other people are present elsewhere in the building, they should be informed that an assessment is taking place and that the learner must not be disturbed or interrupted. To help prevent interruptions, learners are advised to place a notice on the outside of the room door indicating that an exam is in progress.

3.2.2. Workstation

The learner's desk must be clear of all items except:

- the laptop or PC being used for the assessment
- a mouse
- a keyboard
- the learner's identification
- a transparent glass or bottle of water.

If a water bottle is used, it must not have a label attached. During the exam set up process, learners will be required to show the desk, therefore, it is important that the desk is tidy and free from clutter notes or any unauthorised materials.

The learner's camera must be in a front-facing position for the duration of the exam. A front-facing camera position enables VTCT Skills to ensure the learner is only looking at their exam screen. Setting up the camera in any other position than front-facing is not permitted.

As the learner must remain within the view of the camera for the duration of the assessment, it is important the learner ensures their workstation is comfortable before the exam begins. This includes taking any comfort breaks beforehand and adjusting their seating position to maintain comfort throughout the assessment.

There should be sufficient lighting in the room to ensure the learner is always visible to the camera. Similarly, the learner should sit in a location where they are free from glare to avoid any issues with seeing the content on screen.

If a learner is sitting the assessment on a laptop, any external monitors must be disconnected prior to the exam. We would strongly recommend connecting to a power source to ensure the laptop does not run out of battery during the assessment.

3.2.3. Prohibited items

Any use of prohibited items may cause the learners result to be voided therefore it's imperative that learners ensure the following items are removed from the room prior to the exam:

- books, including textbooks and dictionaries (also including bilingual)
- paper, including blank paper, notes, revision materials and coursework
- calculator
- watch, including smart watches
- smart glasses
- any unauthorised wearable technology
- other computers
- secondary monitors/screens
- earphones, headphones or headsets
- USB/memory sticks
- TV/radio (these must be switched off if they cannot be removed)
- labelled drink bottles
- any other electronic device that enables recording or provides access to the internet, this includes, but is not limited to, the following devices:
 - tablets, including iPads
 - mobile phones
 - cameras
 - iPods or MP3 players
 - MP4 players
 - Dictaphones
 - smart speakers
 - E-readers

Please note, VTCT Skills respects the religious and cultural requirements of all learners. Religious headwear may be worn throughout the assessment; however, it must not contain, cover, or conceal any electronic devices or materials that could be used to gain an unfair advantage. As part of the assessment security checks, learners may be asked to confirm that their headwear is free from unauthorised items while ensuring that their dignity and religious observance are respected.

3.3. Sitting an assessment

3.3.1. Mock exam

Once an assessment has been scheduled, a mock exam will become available to the learner. This mock exam can be accessed upon the learner logging in to Saras. The mock exam is a short practice assessment that allows learners to familiarise themselves with both the process

of setting up their R&R remotely invigilated assessment and the functionalities of the exam player. The mock exam will not impact the learners results but is an extremely useful familiarisation tool ahead of sitting an assessment.

3.3.2. Setting up the assessment

There are four steps the learner needs to complete prior to starting their R&R remotely invigilated assessment. These steps will be presented to the learner upon logging in to Saras and clicking the 'Start Exam' button. As mentioned previously, the mock exam will also present the learner with the opportunity to complete these steps for familiarisation purposes.

Step One – User agreement

A user agreement will be presented to the learner. This gives the learner a brief overview of what they will be required to do prior to starting the exam. This also serves as a final reminder for learners that they must remain alone in the room, must not access notes, study materials or electronic devices and must maintain internet connection for the entire duration of the assessment.

The learner will need to confirm they have understood the instructions to proceed to the next step.

Step Two – System check

Once the learner navigates to step two, a system compatibility check will automatically begin. The system check ensures that the learner's camera, speaker and microphone are all working. The system check also ensures that the browser, browser version and operating system are compatible, that the internet speed is sufficient and that cookies are enabled. These system checks are carried out automatically by Saras.

To proceed to the next step, learners will need to click on the 'Check LockDown Browser' button to ensure that LockDown Browser is installed.

Step Three – Photo ID and headshot

The learner must first take a photograph of their photographic identification and then a photograph of themselves. Once both photos have been captured, the learner can progress to the final step.

Acceptable forms of photographic identification are:

- current valid passport for any country
- current biometric residence permit for the UK
- current full or provisional photo card driving licence from the UK, Isle of Man or Channel Islands

Step Four – Room video

The final step requires the learner to capture a video of their room to demonstrate they are in examination conditions. The room scan will last for 50 seconds, providing learners with sufficient time to show their entire surroundings, their desk area is clear of unauthorised items and that they are not wearing a smart watch, using earphones or wearing smart glasses. On

screen instructions are provided to the learner to confirm everything they need to show during this room sweep, these instructions are:

- Slowly turn your camera in a full circle to show the entire room.
- Tilt your camera upwards to show the ceiling.
- Tilt your camera downwards to show the floor area, including under the desk.
- Show that your desk area and workspace is clear of unauthorised items.
- Return your camera to a stable position on the desk.
- Show both wrists to confirm you are not wearing a smart watch.
- Show both ears to confirm that no earphones, earbuds or other audio devices are being worn.
- If wearing glasses, hold them close to the camera to show they are not smart glasses.
- Finally, make sure your face is clearly visible and centred in the frame before proceeding.

If the learner is not satisfied that they have met all these requirements, they will have two opportunities to recapture the room sweep.

Upon completion of this step, the learner will be navigated to the screen where they are able to start their assessment.

3.3.3. Taking the assessment

To start the assessment, the learner will need to select three tick boxes to confirm their name, date of birth and logon ID (learner number) are correct and that they have read and understood the assessment instructions. Pressing 'Start' will begin the assessment and learners will need to adhere to exam conditions from this point. If the learner fails to adhere to exam conditions from this point, it will be captured in the invigilation recording and may result in the exam being voided.

Throughout the assessment, the learner will see a small window that contains their webcam footage. This enables the learner to ensure they can be seen clearly throughout the assessment. This is particularly helpful for learners using an integrated webcam, where they may be closer to the camera. Learners can move the webcam footage window to an area of the screen they deem most suitable by clicking and dragging the window.

The learner must not intentionally close the LockDown Browser, disconnect their internet connection or use another device to seek assistance while an assessment is in progress. If the internet connection is temporarily lost, the assessment will stop and the learner should attempt to reconnect to the internet and resume the assessment. If the assessment cannot be resumed, the learner should notify their centre to ensure an incident report is submitted.

System interruptions, disconnections and assessment restarts are recorded and may be reviewed as part of the R&R Remote Invigilation process. A technical interruption will not automatically cause an assessment to be voided; VTCT Skills will consider the circumstances and available recording evidence.

Upon finishing the assessment, the invigilation footage will be uploaded to VTCT Skills and then reviewed by a team of VTCT Skills reviewers to ensure the validity of the assessment.

3.3.4. Flagged behaviour

The list below is not exhaustive but includes examples of behaviours that will be flagged for VTCT Skills reviewers to investigate further.

Learners must be aware that should any instances of the following behaviours occur during their assessment; it may lead to the void of their result:

- insufficient recording of the room scan video
- insufficient photo of themselves or their ID
- the photo or webcam footage not matching their ID
- the use or attempted use of a secondary screen/monitor
- another person entering the assessment room
- leaving the view of the camera
- covering the camera or the microphone
- attempting to obscure parts of the room from view
- insufficient lighting
- leaving the assessment room
- looking somewhere other than the screen consistently
- talking
- closing the assessment or LockDown Browser
- recording interruptions or repeated loss of internet connection
- the use of any prohibited items
- any attempt to cheat.

Should any of these flags occur during a learner's assessment, VTCT Skills may need to contact the learner directly to investigate further.

4. Contact us

If you have any further queries regarding R&R Remote Invigilation or require support, please contact VTCT Skills on:

Telephone: +44 (0) 23 8068 4500

Email: customersupport@vtctskills.org.uk or exams@vtctskills.org.uk