

aat

# Making assessment centres COVID-secure and supporting social distancing

June 2020 v1.1

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## Change log

Version	Date	Change description
1.0	08/06/2020	Document created
1.1	16/06/2020	Addition of DfE guidance and link in first paragraph and Appendix

## Section 1 - Introduction

Assessment centres must ensure that lockdown and social distancing measures in the country where they are located have been relaxed sufficiently for them to offer AAT assessments safely.

Assessment centres are advised to refer to the [current advice for colleges \(gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/maintaining-education-and-skills-training-provision-further-education-providers\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/maintaining-education-and-skills-training-provision-further-education-providers) issued by the Department for Education in England, or to the equivalent guidance in the country where they are located.

Assuming that lockdown and social distancing measures in the country where they are located have been relaxed sufficiently, assessment centres are responsible for ensuring that they are COVID-secure and can support social distancing during the assessment process, putting the health and safety of staff and students first.

This guide is designed to help assessment centres become COVID-secure in preparation for hosting AAT assessments, and to help enforce social distancing at the assessment centre and within the assessment room.

It draws on the latest guidance from Public Health England, at point of publication, and is based on the requirements and expectations of the assessment centre before, during and after the assessment, as defined within the *Instructions for conducting AAT Computer Based Assessments guide* on the [CBA support page \(aat.org.uk/assessment/secureassess/support\)](https://aat.org.uk/assessment/secureassess/support).

Assessment centres operating outside of England must refer to their own government's advice and apply it accordingly to the below requirements for hosting AAT assessments – see Appendix A for relevant links within the UK.

As government advice changes, AAT will keep this document under review and amend as appropriate and necessary. However, it is the assessment centre's responsibility to ensure they keep themselves up to date with, and follow, their government's latest guidance.

Whilst the information contained in this guide is advice, assessment centres may implement different ways of meeting the guidance of the government in the country that the assessment is taking place in.

Further advice and guidance on cleaning in a non-healthcare setting can be found in [Public Health England's Cleaning of Non-Healthcare Settings guidance \(gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings).

Further advice and guidance for educational settings can be found in [Public Health England's Guidance to Educational Settings \(gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19).

Advice on these Public Health England webpages, or from the government in the country where the assessment is being taken, should always be referred to.

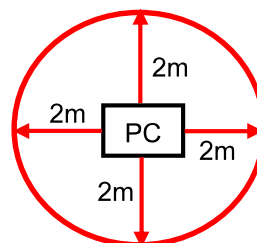
Dependent on the extent of the social distancing guidelines issued by the government in the country where the assessment is being taken, you and / or your students may prefer to sit the assessment via remote invigilation rather than at your centre. If so, please refer to the [dedicated remote invigilation webpage \(aat.org.uk/assessment/coronavirus-covid-19/remote-invigilation\)](https://aat.org.uk/assessment/coronavirus-covid-19/remote-invigilation) for further information.

## Section 2 - Pre-assessment checks

For further information regarding all required pre-assessment checks that support the below topics, see section 3 of the *Instructions for conducting AAT Computer Based Assessments guide* on the [CBA support page](#).

### Assessment environment

- Ensure that there is at least a two-metre radius between all computers and workstations that will be used for assessments, but bear in mind that invigilators may need to walk around the room or speak to students during the assessment session
- Ensure computers with access to required third-party software to support the Access to Accounting Software (AASW), Advanced Diploma synoptic (AVSY) and Using Accounting Software (UACS) assessments are made available



### Staff and students

- If any members of staff or students already have, or develop or show, the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), they should be advised to stay at home, or be sent home, and self-isolate
- You may wish to make Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the form of gloves and / or face masks and / or visors available to staff and students and encourage regular and adequate handwashing
- The use of hand sanitisers should be made available to all staff and students
- If possible, limit the number of staff that a student has face-to-face contact with before, during and after the assessment
- AAT's guidance on the required number of invigilators per session based on student volumes remains, to ensure that assessments are adequately invigilated and to reduce the risk of cheating or malpractice. Given social distancing however, it is unlikely that there will be large sessions in a single assessment room

### Scheduling assessments

- Limit scheduling based on a suitable capacity within your assessment room(s) to support social distancing and to reduce the requirement for more invigilators
- You may wish to make more assessment rooms available to meet demand whilst enforcing social distancing. If so, all assessment rooms must meet the requirements laid out in this document and the *Instructions for conducting AAT Computer Based Assessments guide*

### Before the assessment

- Students waiting to enter the assessment room should be spaced at least a two-metre radius apart
- Students and assessment staff should be encouraged to wash their hands, and / or use hand sanitiser, prior to entering the assessment room
- Keep rooms well ventilated
- Where possible, students should have designated safe spaces to leave their belongings, that are spaced two metres apart
- Ensure that you have sufficient space and clear guidance / markings to enforce this
- You may wish to put up posters around your assessment centre advising of coronavirus (COVID-19), symptoms and processes that your centre has in place, such as social distancing, floor markings, one-way systems etc
- Clean all computers, equipment and workstations before and after use. To avoid disrupting students, this should be done before and after each assessment session

- Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces more often than usual using standard cleaning products
- For further guidance on cleaning, refer to the [Public Health England's Cleaning of Non-Healthcare Settings guidance](#), or follow the guidance issued by the government in the country where the assessment is being taken
- Students should enter the room one by one and be seated prior to the next student entering the room – allow for additional time before starting the assessment session for all students to take their seats
- Prepare for assessment sessions with seating plans
- When issuing keycode slips, it may be more appropriate to set up a non-contact system to allow students to collect it from staff rather than be given it. If students are given keycode slips, centre staff should use PPE when handing it out, and / or ensure regular and adequate handwashing, and / or use hand sanitiser

### Proof of ID

- Where possible, avoid touching a student's ID and verify by sight. Establish a non-contact way for students to keep hold of and show their ID, or for them to place it on a desk whilst maintaining a distance of at least two metres
- If a non-contact verification method cannot be established, centre staff should use PPE when handling the ID and / or ensure regular and adequate handwashing, and / or use hand sanitiser

### Student equipment

- If possible, establish a non-contact way of checking student equipment prior to them entering the assessment room
- If a non-contact verification method cannot be established, centre staff should use gloves to check student equipment
- Should a student forget any of their equipment and the centre allows for the provision of it, any borrowed equipment should be cleaned before and after use and handed out using relevant and appropriate PPE and / or ensure regular and adequate handwashing
- It may be more appropriate to set up a system to allow students to collect their own rough paper from staff rather than be given it. If they are given rough paper, centre staff should use PPE when handing it out and / or ensure regular and adequate handwashing
- Students may wear PPE in the form of gloves and face masks during the assessment, however these should be checked, preferably using non-contact methods, by the centre staff to ensure there is no hidden equipment or notes

### Reasonable adjustments

- Where reasonable adjustments require the use of a Reader, Scribe, Prompter and / or Qualified Communications Professional, ensure that any person(s) fulfilling these roles are spaced at least two metres away from the student. This may be more difficult to enforce, for example, where a Scribe is being used and the student needs to check what has been entered for their response
- Anyone operating in these roles should use relevant and suitable PPE, if available, and / or ensure regular and adequate handwashing, and/or use hand sanitiser
- To limit the number of people in an assessment room, any use of the above roles should be invigilated separately in another assessment room
- Where regular rest breaks are required, these must be supervised. It may be easier for a student with this requirement to be separately invigilated in another room to allow them to remain in invigilated conditions and be supervised without distracting other students, and to allow the supervised rest break to meet social distancing requirements
- **Until further notice, all reasonable adjustment notifications and requests and all special consideration requests must be submitted electronically to [assessment.operations@aat.org.uk](mailto:assessment.operations@aat.org.uk)**

### Setting up third party software prior to the assessment

- For some cloud-based software, centres are required to login on behalf of student. This should be done in advance of the student sitting at the computer and the workstation should be cleaned before the student takes a seat

## Section 3 - During the assessment

For further information regarding the responsibilities of the invigilator(s) and support requirements for in-progress assessments, see section 4 of the *Instructions for conducting AAT Computer Based Assessments guide* on the [CBA support page](#).

### Live assessment issues

- Establish a way for students to notify and speak to the invigilator from a two-metre distance, without disrupting other students who are taking their assessments
- If the invigilator, or a member of technical support, needs to troubleshoot on the computer, ensure that the student is able to wait at a safe distance. If necessary, the invigilator or member of technical support should wear relevant and suitable PPE when assisting and / or make use of wipes and / or hand sanitisers, and / or ensure regular and adequate handwashing
- AATs live assessment troubleshooting guides can be found within the *Instructions for conducting AAT Computer Based Assessments guide* and on the [CBA support page](#). You may be able to print some basic troubleshooting guides to allow students to self-resolve
- Alternatively, invigilators may verbally instruct the student of the required steps to resolve the issue to avoid the need to come into contact with the workstation

### Modifying the duration of an in-progress assessment

- For additional time to be applied to an in-progress assessment, SecureClient needs to be closed down and restarted. Follow the above guidance regarding an invigilator interacting with the student's workstation to allow for this

### Breaks during the assessment

- All breaks during an assessment must be supervised. Whilst some students may wish to stay at their workstation, other students may require a toilet break. Ensure supervision whilst social distancing is enforced. See also rest breaks under Reasonable Adjustments

### Emergencies and incidents

- If an assessment room and / or building does need to be evacuated, it may be difficult to enforce social distancing. However, students must be supervised whilst they are out of the assessment room and remain under assessment conditions should it be possible to resume the assessment
- If it is possible to resume the assessment, the above guidance on entering the assessment room should be followed

## Section 4 - After the assessment

For further information regarding the responsibilities of the student(s) and invigilator(s) after an assessment, see section 5 of the *Instructions for conducting AAT Computer Based Assessments guide* on the [CBA support page](#).

### Assessment submission offline

- If you are required to check the connection on a student's computer and submit the assessment on their behalf (where they submitted it whilst offline), centre staff may wish to

wait until the assessment session has finished before actioning this on the student's computer. You may wish to clean the computer first and / or use relevant and suitable PPE when sitting at the workstation and / or ensure regular and adequate handwashing

#### **Informing centre staff of an issue**

- Students may notify centre staff of an issue during their assessment after they have left the assessment room. Ensure that they are able to do this from a two-metre distance
- **Until further notice, all reasonable adjustment notifications and requests and all special consideration requests must be submitted electronically to [assessment.operations@aat.org.uk](mailto:assessment.operations@aat.org.uk)**
- **Similarly, all incident reports must be submitted electronically to [centre.support@aat.org.uk](mailto:centre.support@aat.org.uk)**

#### **Leaving the assessment room and building**

- Following completion and submission of their assessment, students should be encouraged to leave the assessment room one by one. The adjacent room should be clear, or gatherings closely monitored, to ensure that a crowd does not build up, for example if students need to collect their belongings or notify centre staff of an issue

#### **Collecting rough paper / clearing the workstation**

- Centre staff may wish to use relevant and suitable PPE and / or ensure regular and adequate handwashing, when collecting rough paper after a student has left the assessment room or at the end of an assessment session

#### **Retrieving student evidence for incident reports / deleting student evidence from the computer**

- As per above guidance, centre staff may wish to wait until the assessment session has finished before retrieving assessment evidence from a computer that a student could not upload, to allow them to submit with an incident report. Centre staff may wish to clean the computer first or use relevant and suitable PPE, and / or ensure regular and adequate handwashing, and / or use hand sanitiser, when sitting at the workstation

#### **Cleaning the computer after use**

- After every assessment session, or prior to the next session, all computers and workstations that have been used for assessments should be cleaned. For further guidance on cleaning, refer to the [Public Health England's Cleaning of Non-Healthcare Settings guidance](#), or follow the guidance issued by the government in the country where the assessment is being taken.

## Appendix A

For the latest government advice within the UK, please visit one of the following relevant websites:

- England

[gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

[gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare)

[gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/maintaining-education-and-skills-training-provision-further-education-providers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision/maintaining-education-and-skills-training-provision-further-education-providers)

- Scotland

[gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/)

See also section 'Schools, education, children and young people'

- Wales

[gov.wales/coronavirus](https://www.gov.wales/coronavirus)

[gov.wales/education-coronavirus](https://www.gov.wales/education-coronavirus)

- Northern Ireland

[nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19](https://nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19)

[nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-schools-colleges-and-universities](https://nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-schools-colleges-and-universities)

Assessment centres outside of the UK should follow guidance issued by the government in the country where the assessment is being taken.