

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Observers

1. Who is an Observer, in CA exams?

CA exams are conducted across around 850 centres in India and abroad. The exams are conducted by the Centre Superintendent, supported by invigilators, clerical and other staff of the respective school / college. Local members of the Institute are appointed in each exam centre to oversee and ensure smooth conduct of the exams they are called as **"Observers"**.

2. What is the role of an Observer?

The primary and core function of an Observer is to:

- Visit the bank on a daily basis at the designated time and ensure that correct question paper packets meant for the day are collected by the Centre Superintendent.
- Check and ensure that the correct question paper packets meant for the day are opened by the Centre Superintendent and distributed to the candidates.
- Ensure that all the answer books are collected from the candidates after the exam is over, reconciled, packed and delivered to the courier agency.

The other functions he is expected to discharge are as follows:

- Observe and report on the basic facilities and services like furniture, lighting, drinking water, clean and separate toilets for males/females, seating arrangements, directions to the students, invigilation, time management, collection and dispatch of answer books, reporting of unfair means cases etc are taken care of appropriately at the centre.
- Ensure that exams are conducted smoothly.

3. Is the role of an Observer akin to that of an invigilator?"

No. The role of an Observer is not similar to the one of an invigilator. Invigilators are appointed from amongst the staff members of the exam centre. Observers are required to simply observe and report any issues that might come to their notice to the Centre Superintendent or the Exam Dept. as the case may be. They are not expected to actively participate in the conduct of exams. Whereas invigilators appointed by the examination center are required to ensure that the students in his/her room write the exam properly without resorting to any unfair means.

4. Who is eligible to apply for the assignment of Observer for the December 2021 exams?

The eligibility criteria for taking up the assignment of an Observer are as follows:

- (a) He should not be more than 65 years of age as on the date of empanelment i.e. 15th September, 2021,
- (b) His/her name is borne on the Register of Members as on 1st May 2019 and continues to be borne so,
- (c) Neither he/she nor his/her relatives* or dependant* is / will be appearing in the ensuing Chartered Accountants Examinations for students / Post – Qualification Course Examinations in December, 2021 in any examination centres in India or Abroad. However, applying or

appearance in ISA – AT will not be considered a disability for observership for December, 2021 Examinations.

(d) He /she is not coaching students for any of the examinations / test conducted by the Council of the Institute in any institutions / organization including Regional Councils / Branches of the Institute and also private coaching,

(e) He/she has not been convicted by any court of Law and no disciplinary proceedings are pending against him / her either by the ICAI / Disciplinary Directorate or by any other organization, both in India or abroad;

(f) He/she is not associated with the Institute as an elected/ co-opted member of the Council / Regional Council / Managing Committee of any Branch of the ICAI; and

(g) He/she shall abide by the Guidelines for Observer and / or any other instructions.

(h) He/she is not a covid patient/ or having symptoms of Covid and will not take any assignment of Observer's duty if detected on duty dates

5. What is the definition of "relative"

The term "relative" or "dependant" for the purpose shall include, in relation to an individual, the wife, husband, son, daughter-in-law, daughter, son-in-law, grandson, granddaughter, brother, brother's wife, brother's son, brother's daughter, sister, sister's husband, sister's son, sister's daughter, wife's brother, wife's sister and husband's brother and husband's sister

6. How to apply for the appointment of Observer?

A member who fulfils the above-mentioned eligibility criteria, desirous of empanelling himself for the assignment, may do so, online at <http://observers.icaieexam.icaai.org>. A member has to empanel himself for each exam cycle i.e. for every May and November Examinations.

7. Can I exchange my assignment with some other Observer?

No. The assignment is not transferable.

8. I have been allotted Observer duty on certain dates. Can I request for change of those dates?

No. Change of dates of duty is not permissible. However partial acceptance of observer duty can be done.

9. I have been allotted duty at Mumbai whereas I reside in Kota? Can the duty be transferred to Kota?

No. Observer duty is allotted to you, at the city of your professional address, as per Institute's records. It cannot be transferred.

10. I am unable to perform the assignment on the date allotted to me. What should I do? Can I seek change of dates?

No. Change of dates is not possible. You are required to inform the Institute regarding your inability to perform the duty well in advance so that the alternate arrangement can be made.

11. A student articulated (current or former) under me, is appearing in the forthcoming exam? Can I apply for Observership for the same exam?

If your articulated assistants, whether current or former, are appearing in a particular centre for December 2021 CA Examination, you should avoid opting for such centre of examinations.

12. What is the honorarium, local conveyance etc payable to Observers

Honorarium	₹ 1500/- per day
Reimbursement of local conveyance	Actuals limited to ₹ 350/- per day for A class cities and ₹ 250/- per day for other cities.
Reimbursements of Postage, stationery, telephone expenses (Reimbursement of food charges is not permitted)	Actuals

The "A" Class cities are: Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi/ New Delhi, Hyderabad/ Secunderabad, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kolkata/Howrah, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, Pune,

13. What is the procedure for collecting the question paper packets from the bank?

The question papers of CA exams do not have the subject headings/names of the examination(s) but only bear certain alphabetical secret codes. They are kept in the sealed envelopes, in the safe custody of bank.

The sealed question Paper packets meant for each day of examination are to be collected on a day-to-day basis from the designated branch of BANK OF BARODA, by the Centre Superintendent or his authorized representative.

Observer appointed for a particular Centre is required to be present at the premises of the BANK OF BARODA at **12.15 PM** sharp daily on the examination days (for which he / she has been assigned the observer duty) to verify that the correct code packets are being collected and all packets pertaining to each Code are being collected by the Superintendent or his authorized representative and accompany them to the Centre along with the Confidential Material.

The code meant for the day is to be ascertained from the CODE KEY sent to the bank and also the Centre Superintendent.

The code key is in PIN mailer type of stationery (similar to one used by Banks for mailing the PIN number of debit and credit cards).

The Code key for each day of examination will be in the form of PIN mailer which will contain two sheets pasted on all four sides with perforation on the right side and scissors sign on the top indicating where to cut open. The first part will contain details such as date of examination, day, timings, name of the examination, group or module, paper number and name of the paper on the left side and the right side will be blackened by carbon. This first part will not display the code.

Once you tally the date of examination, day, name of the examination, group or module, paper number and name of the paper on the first part with the help of the time table, in order to know the relevant code, you can cut open the sheet with the help of scissors/scale at relevant place as indicated by the sign. Once the same is cut open, on the second part you will find the alphabetical CODE on the right side and all other details in the left side such as date of examination, day, name of the examination, group or module, paper number and name of the paper.

Upon reaching the examination Centre, the sealed packets shall be kept in safe custody of the Centre Superintendent and the same shall only be taken out at the examination centre forty five minutes before the commencement of examination i.e. **13.15 hrs** (IST) on each day of the examination in case the centre has been allotted more than 500 candidates in the presence of Chief Invigilator/Observer(s)/Special Observer. In case the centre has been allotted less than 500 candidates, the sealed packets will be taken out at **13.30 hrs (IST)**.

The observer has to ensure that no exam functionary is in possession of mobile Phone or any other electronic device at the time of opening the question paper packets.

14. Can the Centre Superintendent collect the question paper packets, in the absence of Observer?

If, for any reason, the observer(s) is/ are not present as above, the Centre Superintendent or his authorized representative and the concerned official of the Bank of Baroda would be constrained to proceed without waiting for the arrival of the observer(s). However, such an instance would be brought before the appropriate authority of the Institute.

15. What are the examination timings?

Paper 3 & 4 of Foundation Examination are of 2 hours duration. Similarly, Elective Paper - 6 of Final Examination (under revised scheme) is of 4 hours. However, all other examinations are of 3 hours duration, and the examination wise timing(s) are given below:

Examination	Paper(s)	Exam. Timings (IST)	Duration
Foundation	Paper 1 & 2	2 PM to 5 PM	3 Hours
	Paper 3 & 4*	2 PM to 4 PM	2 Hours
Intermediate (IPC) (Old Scheme)	All Papers	2 PM to 5 PM	3 Hours
Intermediate (New Scheme)	All Papers	2 PM to 5 PM	3 Hours
Final (Old Scheme)	All Papers	2 PM to 5 PM	3 Hours
Final (New Scheme)	Paper 1 to 5 &	2 PM to 5 PM	3 Hours

	Paper 7 & 8.		
	Paper 6 (Elective)	2 PM to 6 PM	4 Hours
Post Qualification Course Examinations i.e. IRM Technical Examination, and (INTT – AT)	ALL	2 PM to 5 PM	3 Hours

Candidates are allowed late entry upto **2.15 P.M.(IST)** in all papers. Candidates will be allowed to leave the examination hall **from 4.00 PM onwards.**

16.What timings should I follow as an Observer?

You have to be present at the appointed time i.e. by **12.15 PM** in the Bank on all assigned days, thereafter accompany the Centre Superintendent alongwith the sealed question papers packets after duly checking and tallying the same (relevant code and the number of packets) in the premises of the Bank. The Observer(s) may also, if required, visit the Bank Branch one day in advance to familiarize, with the location and for ascertaining the time required for travel from his/ their place to the Bank for being present by **12.15 PM** on all assigned exam days. If, for any reason, the observer(s) is/ are not present at the Bank as above, the Centre Superintendent or his authorized representative and the concerned official of the Bank of Baroda would be constrained to proceed without waiting for the arrival of the observer(s). However, such an instance would be brought before the appropriate authority of the Institute. You are required to be present in the centre till the time the answer books (including answer books of physically handicapped candidates, if any) are collected, reconciled, packed and handed over to the courier agency.

17. What is my role with regard to physically handicapped candidates?

Such students apply to the Institute with necessary documentation for issue of permanent card for the facility of extended time/ writer. The students whose application are received late, are issued letter for the facility. Please note that only such students having permanent card/ letter are allowed the support of extended time/ writer.

Students who do not have written permission from the Institute are not entitled / allowed any relaxations.

Reference is invited to Provision for Writer's Help or Extra Time which form part of the Instructions to Superintendents. With regard to the above, the Observer(s) are required **to ensure, through the Centre Superintendent**, as under wherever a differently abled – Physically and / or visually - candidate is appearing:

(A) WHEREVER A DIFFERENTLY ABLED – PHYSICALLY AND/ OR VISUALLY- CANDIDATE IS APPEARING –

- (i) Such a candidate is seated on the ground floor *[if the examinations room(s)/Hall(s) are on the first or upper floors, special arrangements be made on the ground floor and separate invigilator be appointed]*

- (ii) Their answer book(s) are collected after the conclusion of permitted extra time *[unless the candidates concerned desire to surrender their answer book(s) otherwise* and sent to ICAI by Speed Post, on the day of the exam, itself. Such answer books are not to be retained at the center, for despatch on the next day.
- (iii) Writer engaged out of the Panel (Panel of writers as maintained by the ICAI) /brought by a candidate is in accordance with the related guidelines, particularly with regard to —
 - (a) Qualification of a writer, and
 - (b) Change in writer
- (iv) Writer Certification [declaration], in the given format, is submitted by the candidate as well as by the writer engaged / brought by the candidate. A writer is eligible for a honorarium of Rs 500/- per day. The candidate and the writer are required to submit a bill for the honorarium in the prescribed format. Centres have been authorized to pay the said honorarium, to the writer, on a daily basis out of the advance specifically sent for the purpose, and settle the same along with their bill.

18. What is my role with regard to Unfair Means cases that might be noticed?

In case you come across any case of resort to unfair means please report the same to the Centre Superintendent or Chief Invigilator. The Superintendent has to report such incident, inter alia, with the signature of witness etc. in the format meant for the purpose which is enclosed in the Instructions to the Superintendent together with seized materials like written / printed materials, mobile phone, etc. where you are also required to sign. The report signed by the Superintendent, invigilator, candidate and you together with the answer book of the candidate and the material seized, if any, are required to be sent separately to examination department. If such formalities are not complied with and any such resort to unfairmeans cases are reported in your report only, the same is likely to cause unwarranted hardship to the students as well as other functionaries involved.

19. Who should I contact in case of emergency consultations?

The Superintendent of the examination centre is the final authority in respect of all matters relating to conduct of examinations. Detailed instructions about all aspects of conducting the examination have already been provided to the Centre Superintendent. In case you come across any issue which requires resolution, you may inform the Centre Superintendent who will initiate necessary action to resolve it, in line with the instructions already issued to him. You may escalate the matter to the Exam Dept. only thereafter, if the issue remains unresolved by the Centre Superintendent.

In case of any clarification/assistance, prior to or during the course of examinations, you may contact any of the following Officers of the Examination Department

Escalation Levels	Name of the designated officer	Contact Numbers
1.	Sunil Pandey Section Officer (S U)	(0120) -3054846 / 3054829 / 09560507605
2.	CMA Prashant Bakshi	(0120) 3054822 / 4953722 / 09310542611

	Deputy Secretary	
3.	Shri S. K. Garg Additional Secretary	(0120) 3054815 / 4953715 / 09350852388

Please note that the above-mentioned numbers are for emergency enquiries and not for routine enquiries. For queries relating to non-allotment of assignment, non-receipt of claims etc you may send a mail at observer@icai.in.

20. I have applied or I am going to appear in the forthcoming Post Qualification Course exams. Am I eligible to apply for being an Observer in the same exam?

Applying for ISA – AT or appearance thereon, held in June/ December every year is not a disability for a member for undertaking the assignment of Observer in Foundation, Intermediate (IPC), Intermediate / Final (old and new scheme) or other Post Qualification Course Exams held in May/ November.

21.How do I claim my honorarium and conveyance?

You can fill the prescribed report and claim form for your honorarium and conveyance online and submit the signed hardcopy of the Bills A& B to the following address:

The Additional Secretary (Examinations)
ICAI Bhawan
C-1, Sector 1
NOIDA - 201 301

22.I have sent my claim for honorarium. But till date, I have not received the payment. Whom should I contact?

Processing of your bills takes about 4-6 weeks. You may send a mail at observer@icai.in giving your membership no, PAN NO, and other details.

23.Who is a Examination Co-ordinator? What is his role? How is his role different from that of an Observer?

The chairman of the branch or regional council or if he has conflict of interest the vice chairman or if he has conflict of interest, then the Secretary or any person of the management committee, authorised in this behalf is appointed as Co-ordinator. He is required to visit the bank 1-2 days before the commencement of the exam, open the cartons of confidential materials sent to the bank, in the presence of the Centre Superintendent or his authorized representative and bank officials, check whether all the confidential material meant for the centre has been received by the Bank and keep them back in the lockers of the bank. He is eligible for an honorarium of ` 1000/- per day (Metro Cities) and ` 500/- (Non Metro Cities) for visiting the Bank. **However he does not have any daily duty during the days of the exam.**

24.There is an error in the question paper. Can we announce any clarification?

No. No exam functionary is authorized to announce any clarification in the question paper, during the exam. Let the student answer the question as per his understanding. Exam

Committee will take care of such issues, at the relevant time. However, students are free to represent those issues by writing an email at examfeedback@icai.in

25. What is the role of an observer with reference to the stock of unused answer books in the centre?

The observer who is on duty on the last day of the exam at the centre is required to prepare a stock report in the prescribed format and submit the same to exam dept. The unused answer books shall continue to be kept at the exam centres

26. What are the provisions relating to "Open Book Exam" in Paper 6 of Final (New) Syllabus?

ICAI had introduced elective subjects in Paper 6 in the CA Final (New) course exam from May 2018 exam and onwards, which is being held on open book methodology. In this regard, it is hereby clarified that it has been decided as follows in respect of Paper 6 Electives- of Final (New) course exam:

- Candidates will be permitted to bring their own material to the exam hall and consult them for answering the questions in the exam. Such material may include study materials, practice manuals, revisionary test papers supplied by ICAI, text books, bare Acts, notes by students or any other reference material.
- Candidates will not be permitted to bring mobile phones, I pads, or any other electronic devices into the exam hall.
- Exchange of any material amongst candidates will not be permitted inside the examination hall/room.

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