

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Observers

1. Who is an Observer, in CA exams?

CA exams are conducted across around 950 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 all the assigned days 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 May 2022 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. 4th March, 2022,
- (b) His/her name is borne on the Register of Members as on 1st November 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 May, 2022 in any examination centres in India or Abroad. However, applying or appearance in ISA – AT will not be considered a disability for observership for May, 2022 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. You must update your professional address in ICAI record through SSP portal.

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. It may please be noted that, these duties are not transferable in any circumstances. If you want to regret the same, please decline the duty in the Portal / send a mail at observer@icai.in well in advance so that the alternate arrangement can be made.

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

If your articled assistants, whether current or former, are appearing in a particular centre for May 2022 CA Examination, you should avoid opting for such centre of examinations.

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

Honorarium	₹ 3000/- 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 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 by following procedure given hereunder:-

1. Observers will need to download the Mobile Application and keep the mobile application open at all the times during the assigned activities of the Exam.
2. Observers need to have an internet connectivity and the app is to be kept open.
3. The observers are required to visit the designated branch of the Banks on all assigned day of the Examination to collect the Confidential Material (Sealed Question Paper Packets) at 12.15 PM sharp on the day of Exam.
4. On reaching the bank branch the observer must click a photograph of himself/herself with the bank in the background through the app. The app will capture the location along with the date and time.
5. the Code of Question Paper Booklet meant for the day of exam will be updated in the Portal through System on day of exam itself.
6. On each day of the examination, the Centre Superintendent or his authorized representative, say Chief Invigilator/ Invigilator, will be required to be present at the premises of the designated Branch of BANK OF BARODA at 12.15 PM sharp along with

(1) Code Key statement and (2) Statement of Code wise packets and wherein Observer(s) appointed for the said Centre is/ are also required to be present at the same time.

7. The Centre Superintendent in the presence of designated official of the Bank and Observer appointed, shall cut open the code key statement with the help of scissors/scale at relevant place as indicated by sign, pertaining to the relevant date of the examination and shall collect all the packets of the respective codes of the examinations allotted to his centre for the said date from the Bank after giving due acknowledgement to the Bank in the specified format. Number of code wise packets collected is to be tallied with the number mentioned against the said code in the code wise packet statement.
8. After verifying the Correct Code(s) of the Sealed Packets, the Observer must scan the QR Codes printed on all the Sealed Question Paper Packets while collecting the same. (IF match **Green**/ Not Match **Red**). If Red, observer Needs to contact ICAI Exam Department Immediately for guidance. App must give a red signal or any indication if the Scanned QR code collected Packets is not matched with the Correct Code(S) of the exam day.
9. QR Code on all packets for the day are to be scanned and verified. For e.g. if there are 10 packets for the day then all packets from 1 to 10 must be scanned as each of these packets have a unique QR Code.
10. Final submission on the mobile app can be done only if all sealed packets meant for the day of exams are scanned, and codes are matched/Green.
11. The QR Code will contain information of Paper Code, Exam Centre Code, Packet No, and Total number of Packets to be collected.
12. In case of any discrepancies while collecting sealed packets of correct Code from the Bank, observers are required to contact ICAI Exam Department Immediately for guidance.
13. After collecting the packets, the Centre Superintendent shall carry the same to the Centre in a **closed vehicle** (Motorcycle/Scooter etc. is not permissible) alongwith the Observer. If felt necessary, the Centre Superintendent may engage a security guard to accompany him in the vehicle.
14. At the Exam Centre, the location of the observer again to be captured at the time of reaching at the centre after collection of Sealed Packets.
15. 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 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.
16. The observer again is required to verify all the Codes of the collected sealed packets at the Exam Centre. In case of any discrepancy, they need to contact ICAI Immediately.

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 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	All Papers	2 PM to 5 PM	3 Hours
Final	Paper 1 to 5 & Paper 7 & 8.	2 PM to 5 PM	3 Hours
	Paper 6 (Elective)	2 PM to 6 PM	4 Hours
	Post Qualification Course Examinations (INTT – AT).	ALL	2 PM to 5 PM

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 unfair means 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, Sr. Executive Officer	(0120) -3054846 / 3054829 / 09560507605
2.	CMA Prashant Bakshi, Deputy Secretary	(0120) 3054822 / 4953722 / 09310542611
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 ISA -AT 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 / Final 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 only 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 Exam Co-ordinator.

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.

27. How to dispatch Attendance Registers of CA Examinations?

Attendance Registers are prepared Course/ Group Wise. Attendance Register contains the details of the students (Name, Registration Number, Roll Number, Name of Papers etc), with Bar code stickers and ensure the presence of the candidates in particular papers. The candidate required to make his signature in the attendance register on the day of exam and he must peel off bar code sticker of the respective exam date and affix the same at the appropriate place in the answer book.

Attendance registers are group wise. After the conclusion of all the exams of particular Group, attendance registers of the concerned Group are to be packed and dispatched by Speed Post immediately.

28. What are MCQ based Question Papers /Hindi Papers?

Following papers of both Intermediate and Final level exams are scheduled to have multiple choice questions to the tune of 30 marks and other questions of descriptive nature to the tune of 70 marks.

Date	Exam	Paper
18 th May 2022	Intermediate	2
19 th May 2022	Final	3
21 st May 2022	Final	4
22 nd May 2022	Intermediate	4
25 th May 2022	Final Electives (A to F)*	6
26 th May 2022	Intermediate	6
27 th May 2022	Final	7
28 th May 2022	Intermediate	7
29 th May 2022	Final	8

* Will contain 40% Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

Candidates of Foundation, Intermediate and Final Examinations will be allowed to opt for English / Hindi medium for answering papers. **Kindly Note that** Question papers in respect of Final candidates will be in English only even for Hindi medium candidates. However, the medium of Examinations will be only English in respect of Post Qualification Course viz.: International Taxation – Assessment Test (INTT – AT).

29. What are different format of Answer Books and how they are to be distributed among the students/ Whether OMRs answer sheets are to be used in CA Exams?

To facilitate our exam functionaries and other stakeholders, ICAI has incorporated the OMR answer sheet on the cover page of 28-page answer books and 20-page, section A answer books and in view of the same now onwards except for Paper - 3 & 4 of CA Foundation Course examination, there is no need of OMR Answer sheets in case of composite papers (i.e. papers which have multiple choice and descriptive questions) of CA Final and Intermediate Exams. To simplify the things further, we have identified answer books with different format number with the dates on which these answer books are required to be distributed among the candidates. Format of the answer books which are to be used on different dates are **given as annexure A**. Observers are required to ensure that Correct Format of the answer books are provided to the students for their respective Exams.

The format of the answer books which are to be used on different dates are given here below:

Date	Format number of the answerbook to be used
14 th May 2022	Format 1 (Final & PQC Exams)
15 th May 2022	Format 1
17 th May 2022	Format 1 (Final & PQC Exams)
18 th May 2022	Format 2
19 th May 2022	Format 2 (Final Exam) Format 1 (PQC Exams)
20 th May 2022	Format 1
21 st May 2022	Format 2 (Final Exam) Format 1 (PQC Exams)
22 nd May 2022	Format 3 & Format 4
23 rd May 2022	Format 1 (Final & Foundation Exams)
24 th May 2022	Format 1
25 th May 2022	Format 5, Final (Elective Paper 6 A to F), Format 1 (Foundation Exams)
26 th May 2022	Format 2
27 th May 2022	Format 2
28 th May 2022	Format 3 & Format 4
29 ^h May 2022	Format 2
30 th May 2022	Format I

In Foundation Paper 3 and 4 respective OMR answer sheets are to be distributed to the students, being 2 hours MCQ Based Papers.

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