CAMBRIDGE
International Education

For exams officers

Key Times and Full Centre Supervision 2027

This document is the Key Times and Full Centre Supervision section of the Cambridge Handbook 2027. It contains key regulations that must be followed when conducting exams.

How and where should I use this document?

You must have access to this document in your main exam room, and any other exam rooms in the March, June, and November 2027 exam series. This can be an electronic copy; however, candidates must not have access to any devices, in accordance with our regulations in section 5.1.8.2 of the Cambridge Handbook. This document does not replace the main Cambridge Handbook and you must make sure you understand and follow our full regulations.

This document is to be used by the Exams Officer and invigilators in the exam room.

The section numbers and headings in this document match those in the full Cambridge Handbook.

Do I need to print this document and place a copy in each exam room?

You must have access to sections 4 and 5 and the 'Key Times and Full Centre Supervision' section (this document) in each exam room. These can be electronic copies; however, candidates must not have access to any devices, in accordance with our regulations in section 5.1.8.2 of the Cambridge Handbook. Alternatively, we have produced an abridged version of sections 4 and 5 and the Key Times and Full Centre Supervision section for centres to print out, available from www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

If you choose to print this document, we recommend printing double sided, to further save paper.

Key Times and Full Centre Supervision

This document explains Key Times and Full Centre Supervision and why it is essential they are followed to maintain the integrity of our assessments.

What are Key Times?

Key Times are a defined point in a timetabled session when candidates must be in the exam or under Full Centre Supervision. Key Times do not apply for windowed exams, for example, speaking tests, art & design exams and Cambridge Checkpoint tests.

Why are Key Times important?

Key Times are important because they prevent confidential exam information being shared with your candidates before their exam. Key Times also prevent your candidates from sharing confidential exam information with other candidates.

What are my Key Times?

Your Key Times are based on your centre's location. You must visit our website before each exam series (www.cambridgeinternational.org/keytimes) so that you know your Key Times.

Who is responsible for implementing Key Times?

The Head of Centre must make sure that Key Times and Full Centre Supervision are covered in your invigilator training sessions. The people put in charge of running each exam must fully understand our Key Times regulations, to make sure that candidates are not allowed to leave before the Key Time. You must keep records of your exam timetable, including any periods of Full Centre Supervision, as well as your invigilator training. We may ask to see these at any time until we have issued certificates.

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How do I use Key Times?

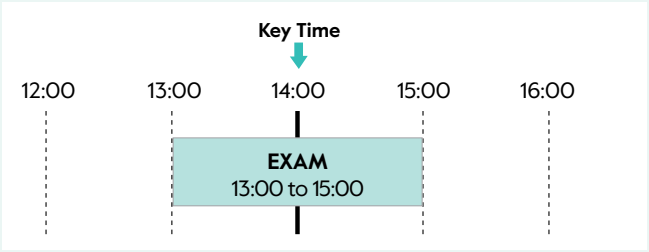
You can choose when your exams start as long as you make sure that your candidates are in the exam or under Full Centre Supervision at the Key Time.

- We timetable all our exams in morning and afternoon sessions (and an evening session for administrative zones 4 and 5).
- You have a Key Time for each session.

Examples

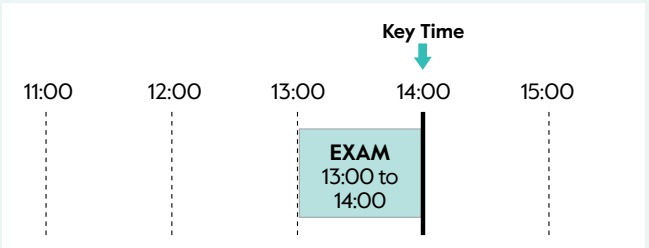
These are examples only, and are not necessarily the same as the Key Times for your centre. We have used the same Key Time in each example to show the different ways you can structure your exams around your Key Times.

Example 1: The Key Time is in the middle of the exam. The exam starts at 13:00 and finishes at 15:00.



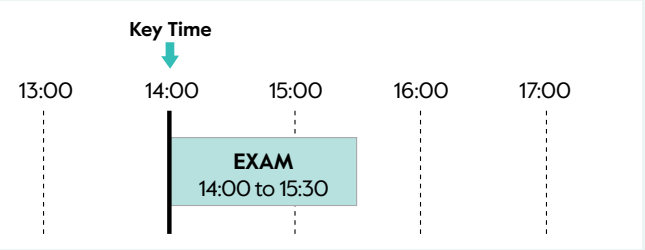
Candidates are in the exam at the Key Time, therefore they do not need to be under Full Centre Supervision before or after the exam. When the exam finishes, candidates can leave the exam room.

Example 2: The Key Time is at the end of the exam. The exam starts at 13:00 and finishes at 14:00.



Candidates must not leave the exam before the Key Time. If an exam ends at the Key Time, candidates can leave the exam room shortly after, as soon as the Key Time has passed. They do not need to be under Full Centre Supervision before or after the exam.

Example 3: The Key Time is at the start of the exam. The exam starts at 14:00 and finishes at 15:30.



Candidates are in the exam at the Key Time and do not need to be under Full Centre Supervision either before or after the exam. When the exam finishes, candidates can leave the exam room.

In any session, you can also choose to start your exam after the Key Time, or finish your exam before the Key Time. If you do this, you must make sure candidates are under Full Centre Supervision until the Key Time has passed.

What is Full Centre Supervision?

Full Centre Supervision is a defined type of supervision for candidates that is conducted by trained members of staff at your centre. If candidates are not in their exam at the Key Time, they must be in a room under Full Centre Supervision until the Key Time has passed, or until the exam starts.

You must supervise candidates under Full Centre Supervision. A supervisor can also be an exam invigilator, although Full Centre Supervision is different from exam invigilation. Supervisors must be suitably trained, and there must be at least one supervisor for every 30 candidates.

During Full Centre Supervision, candidates must not:

- have access to telephones, mobile phones, laptops/computers, watches, or any electronic device with or without internet access
- have access to any other means of communication outside of the supervised group
- be allowed to communicate in any way with anyone who is not under Full Centre Supervision at the centre or outside the centre.

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During Full Centre Supervision candidates can:

- have access to their printed books and notes. Candidates must not look at books and notes on an electronic device
- talk to each other
- leave the room accompanied by a supervisor. Where there is only one supervisor, you must make sure the supervisor can get help without leaving the candidates unattended. You must also make sure you have supervisors available to accompany any candidate, if required.

Other Full Centre Supervision regulations:

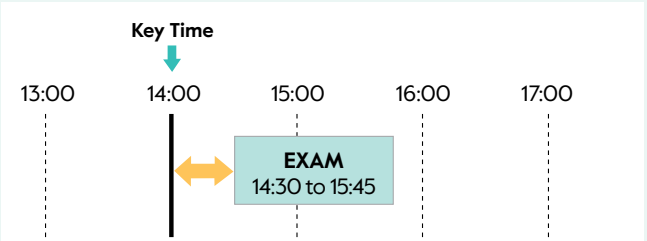
- Full Centre Supervision is designed to help you timetable your exams flexibly. However, when timetabling exams, you must limit the length of time that candidates spend under Full Centre Supervision to minimise the risk to question paper security and candidate wellbeing.
- Candidates under Full Centre Supervision who have already taken an exam that others in the group are due to take, for example an ICT practical test, must be kept separate from those candidates who have not yet taken the test. See section 5.7.4 of the Cambridge Handbook.
- If a candidate arrives late for a period of Full Centre Supervision, either before or after an exam, see section 5.1.10 of the Cambridge Handbook.
- Candidates who do not attend a period of Full Centre Supervision after an exam must be reported to us immediately as suspected malpractice. See section 5.6 of the Cambridge Handbook.
- You must keep signed records of all Full Centre Supervision arrangements for candidates. These records must show candidates who were supervised, the start and end times of supervision, and who conducted the supervision. We may ask to see these records at any time until certificates are issued.

You must arrange necessary periods of Full Centre Supervision. If you do not, we will consider this a breach of our regulations, and will treat it as possible centre staff malpractice. See section 5.6 of the Cambridge Handbook.

Examples

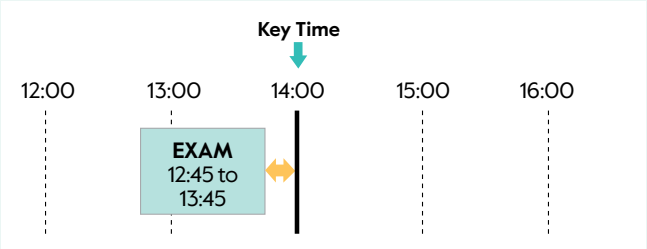
These are examples only, and are not necessarily the same as the Key Times for your centre.

Example 4: The Key Time is before the start of the exam. The exam starts at 14:30 and finishes at 15:45.



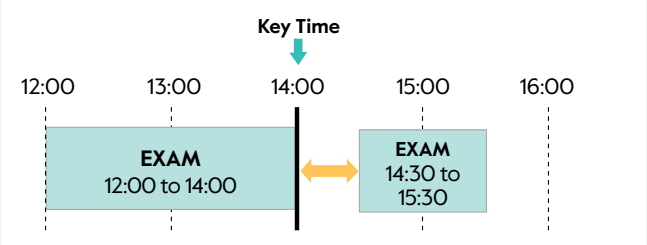
Candidates are not in the exam at the Key Time. They need to be under Full Centre Supervision from the Key Time until the exam begins. When the exam finishes, candidates can leave the exam room.

Example 5: The Key Time is after the end of the exam. The exam starts at 12:45 and finishes at 13:45.



Candidates must be under Full Centre Supervision from the end of the exam until the Key Time. Once the Key Time has passed, candidates can leave the exam room.

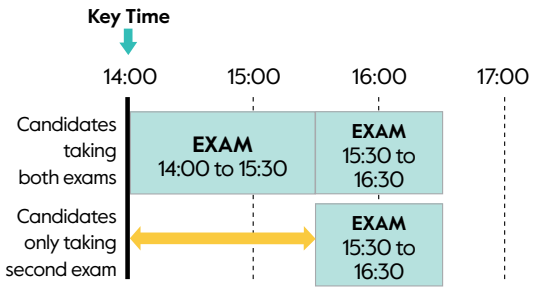
Example 6: The Key Time is at the end of one exam, but before the start of another exam timetabled for the same day. The first exam starts at 12:00 and finishes at 14:00, and the second exam starts at 14:30 and finishes at 15:30.



Candidates are in the exam at the Key Time. However, candidates taking the second exam must be under Full Centre Supervision from the Key Time until the start of their second exam.

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Example 7: The Key Time is at the start of an exam. There are two exams timetabled for the afternoon session, with no spare time in between.



Candidates taking the first exam are in the exam at the Key Time. When the exam finishes at 15:30, candidates can leave the exam room and Full Centre Supervision is not needed. There is no gap between the exams, therefore any candidates who are taking both exams do not need to be under Full Centre Supervision. Any candidates who are only taking the second exam must be under Full Centre Supervision from the Key Time until the start of the exam. When the second exam finishes, candidates can leave the exam room.

Learn more! For more information please visit www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficers or contact Customer Support on +44 (0)1223 553554 or email info@cambridgeinternational.org

We are committed to making our documents accessible in accordance with the WCAG 2.2 Standard. We're always looking to improve the accessibility of our documents. If you find any problems or you think we're not meeting accessibility requirements, please email us at **info@cambridgeinternational.org** with the subject heading: Digital accessibility. If you need this document in a different format, contact us and supply your name, email address and requirements and we will respond within 15 working days.

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