MRCS Part A Online Examination - Exam Format and Exam Day Procedure Document

Please read this document thoroughly. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand, are familiar with and adhere to the instructions within.

Contents

* If you already successfully registered and set up an account with ExamSoft for a previous MRCS Part A examination please navigate straight to section 2 on page 6 of this guide.

## Section 1: Creating your ExamSoft Account and Downloading Examplify

Before completing any of the steps to register, please read the [minimum system requirements](#) very carefully to ensure that the software is compatible with the device that you are using to sit the examination. Any issues must be identified prior to the examination day so that you may find an alternative device if necessary.

The following steps should be completed on the device that you will use to take the assessments on. Please **do not use a mobile phone** to complete these steps.

1. If you have not used ExamSoft before for an MRCS Part A examination then you will receive an email invitation from noreply@examsoft.com. Please click on the 'Join your peers' button in this invite email.
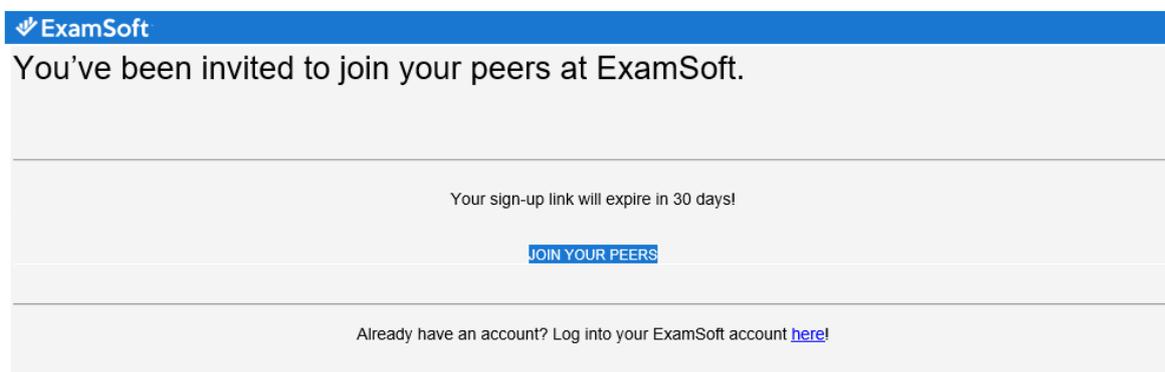

2. You will then be prompted to enter your name and select a password for your ExamSoft account. Please complete this step.

3. After creating your password and following the prompts, you will be brought to your ExamSoft portal. Within the portal, please click on the button that says 'Download Examplify'.

4. Please ensure that you are downloading Examplify onto the device on which you will be sitting your assessments. Then you may click yes when you receive the following prompt before downloading the Examplify software.
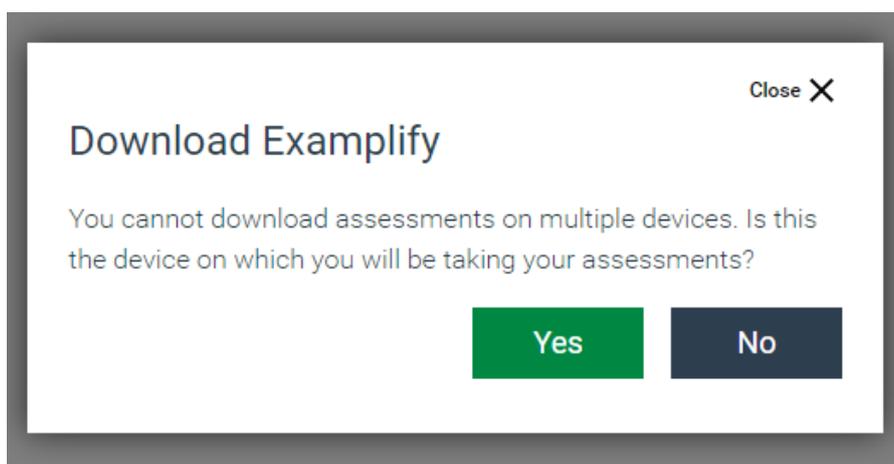
5. Once the download is complete, install Examplify. Upon completion of the download launch Examplify.

6. Your institution ID is ICBSE. Once entered into the text field, select your institution from the dropdown menu, then click the green **next** button.
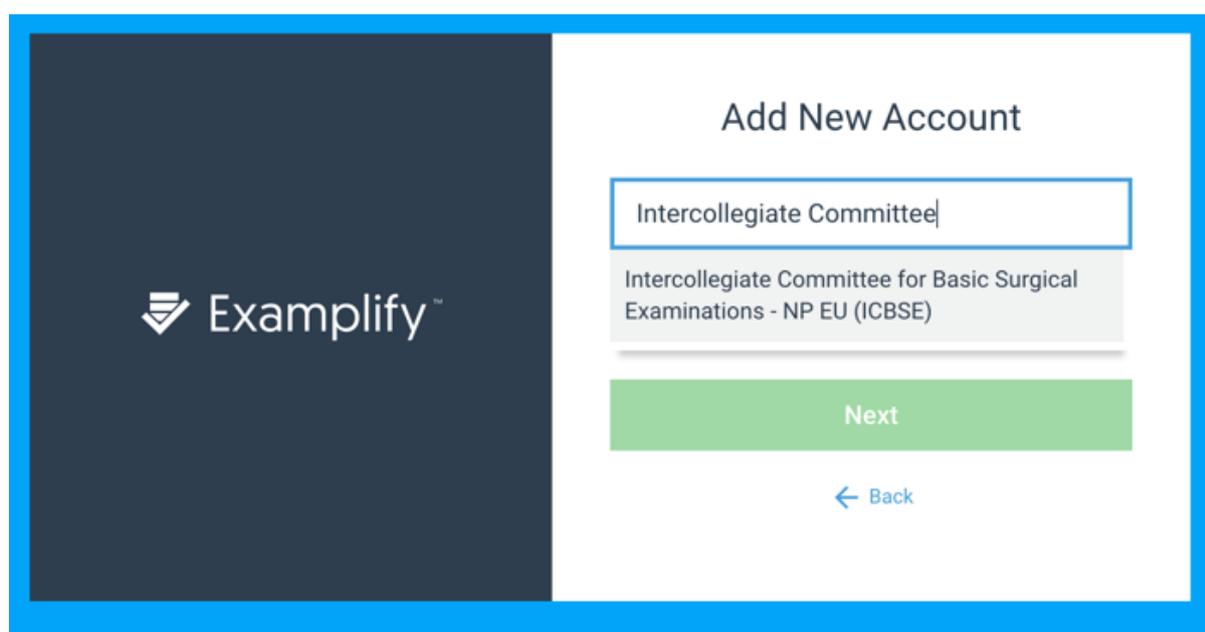
7. Next, enter your email address and password to sign in. This will be the password that you have just created for your ExamSoft account.

Trouble-shooting tip:

- The email invitation can **only be used once**. If you have clicked on the invitation but did not install Examplify at that time, you should navigate to https://europe.examsoft.com. If you have forgotten your password, select 'Forgot Password' to enter your email address for the password reset.

Once you have completed steps 1 – 7 of this section, please navigate to section 3 on page 8 of this guide. Section 2 is only applicable to candidates who successfully registered with ExamSoft for a previous diet.

Section 2: Instructions ONLY for Candidates who successfully set up an ExamSoft account for a previous MRCS Part A diet.

1. If you are already registered on ExamSoft you will not receive an email invite.

If you have deleted the Examplify software from your device: please navigate to https://europe.examsoft.com and log into your account using the email address and password that you set up last time. Please use the 'Download Examplify' button to install the software again and ensure that you complete this on the device that you will be sitting the assessments on. Alternatively use the links included here: Downloading Examplify

*Note: you must log in using the same **email address** that your ExamSoft account was registered with in the previous MRCS Part A sitting.*

If you are still logged into the Examplify software on your device: you will need to 'clear registration' in order to ensure that your software is set up for the current diet and no longer lists outdated examination files. To do this please navigate to the Home Menu on the top right within Examplify and click on the settings option:
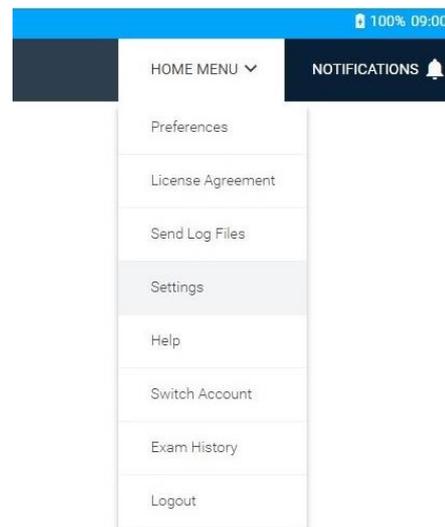
Following this you will be given the option to clear registration. Please click on the green button to clear your registration and agree to the prompts to clear registration when it asks if you are sure. You will click through the following screens until it is indicated that your registration has been cleared successfully:
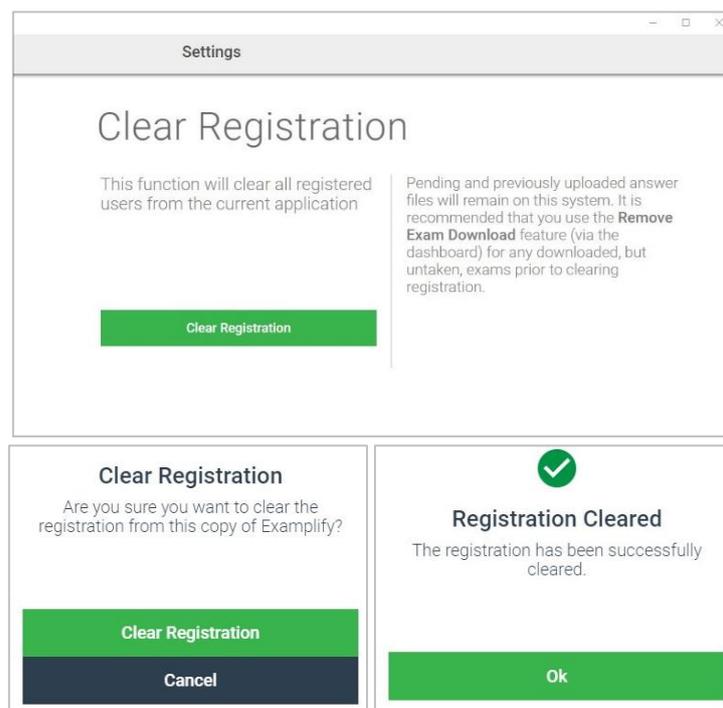
If you have logged out of the Examplify software: you will see an account listed with your candidate number from a previous diet. You will need to click on the **'Add New Account'** button and select your institution again by choosing ICBSE:
You may then log in by entering your **email address** and password on the next screen.
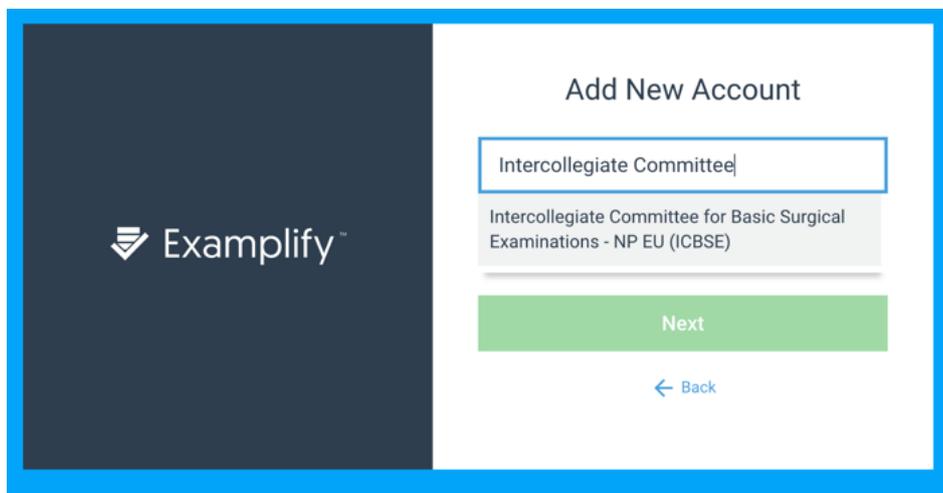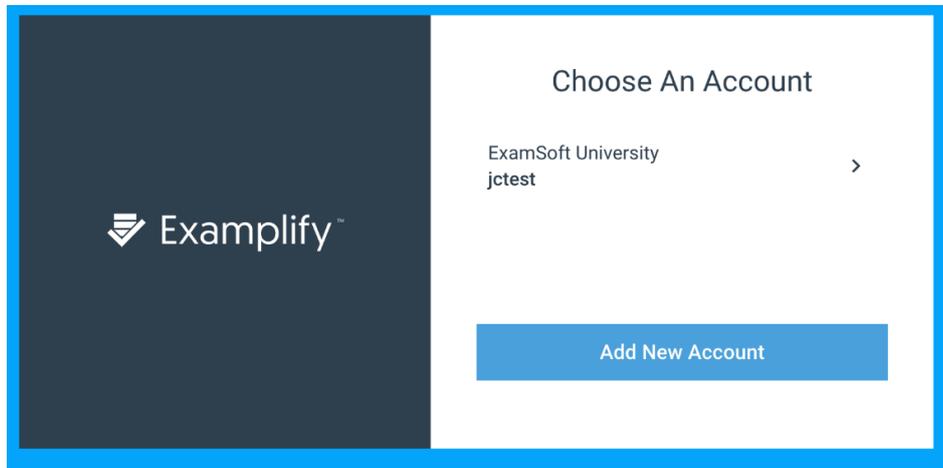
2. Open the Examplify software on your device and log in. Please check the version number in the bottom right corner, where number: 2.6.4 should be displayed:
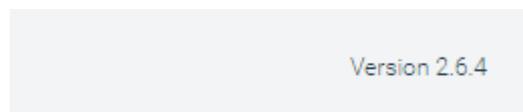
If you are prompted to update the software then please click to agree to the update and relaunch when prompted to do so.

3. You must now proceed to sit both mock examinations as detailed on the following page in Section 3 of this guide.

Section 3: Sitting the Mock Examinations

> *Before sitting any examinations please ensure that you have enabled permissions on your device so that you may be monitored throughout your examinations.*
> *On the following links you will find instructions to prepare your device for invigilation during your exam paper:*
> *ExamID and ExamMonitor Permission Setup for MAC users*
> *ExamID and ExamMonitor Permission Setup for Windows users*

You must sit both Mock 1 and Mock 2 examinations by Tuesday 13th April. This should take no longer than 10 minutes. **Any candidate who does not complete the mock examinations by this date will not be permitted to sit the MRCS Part A examination.**

1. Within the Examplify application, download both MRCS Part A – Mock Exam 1 and MRCS Part A – Mock Exam 2 by selecting the blue download arrow. If you do not see the exam you are scheduled to take, click the "refresh exam list" button. Enter the password for MRCS Part A – Mock Exam 1 to enter the secure assessment. The password is **ICBSEmock123**. Please remember that the password is case-sensitive.

2. If you have not used Examplify before you will now be instructed to take a photo for ExamID. Please refer to this resource for the steps to complete this process: Examplify with ExamID and ExamMonitor

3. After submitting your responses for Mock Exam 1, please complete Mock Exam 2. The password is also **ICBSEmock123**. The purpose of Mock Exam 2 is to ensure that your ID may be verified against the photo that was captured for Mock Exam 1. If you cannot verify your photo on this second attempt, please contact the college with which you are sitting so that they may remove the first attempt.

Please note that the mock examinations <u>will not be marked</u> and your college will not review the ExamMonitor video files.

A third, optional, practice assessment will also be available on your Examplify application. This will not be timed or monitored and you may use this assessment to familiarise yourself with the Examplify software in preparation for the examination day if you wish to. You do not have to complete this.

The password for the optional assessment is the same as Mock 1 and Mock 2. After entering the password, you will be presented with a series of two screens indicating that that you should wait to begin. **<u>You do not have to wait.</u>** Please choose Continue on the first screen. On the second screen, check the box stating that you are authorised to start the exam and select Start Exam.
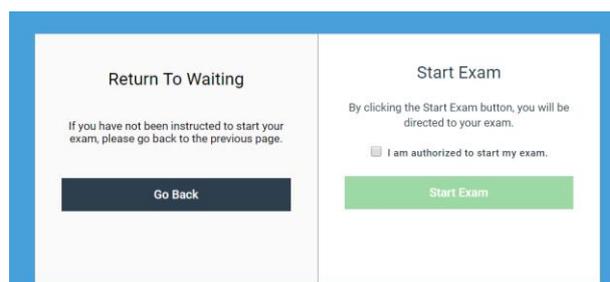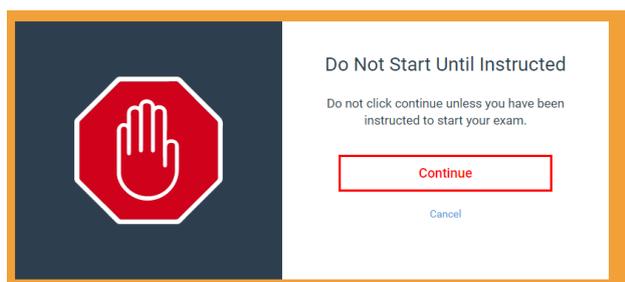
Section 4: MRCS Part A Examination

MRCS Part A normally comprises a three-hour MCQ paper (Applied Basic Science - ABS) followed by a two-hour MCQ paper (Principles of Surgery in General - PoSG). To facilitate remote delivery, the MCQ exam will be delivered in sections with a comfort break between each section. The ABS paper will consist of 2 x 1.5 hour papers, with a short break between each. These will be treated as individual papers - you will not be able to return to questions you have answered after submitting each one. Due to the shorter examination time, the PoSG paper will be delivered in one 2-hour session *with no break*.

As such, there will be **three examination paper files** which will become available to download from the Saturday before your examination. For example, for the examination taking place on Tuesday 20th April 2021 your examination files will be available to download on Examplify from Saturday 17th April 2021. ***Please download all three examination paper files in advance of the examination day.***

On the morning of the examination day the password to enter both parts of the ABS examination will become live on this site: https://eps.examsoft.com/icbse 30 minutes prior to the scheduled examination start time. In addition to this, the college with which you are sitting the examination will email the password to you 30 minutes prior to the examination start time. Please ensure that you click to start the ABS 1 examination file before the ABS 2 examination file. The PoSG password will be different and will again become live on this password site https://eps.examsoft.com/icbse 30 minutes prior to the start of the examination and will be emailed to you by your examining college at this time. Extra time candidates: please note that your password will not be listed on the website but will be emailed to you by your college 30 minutes prior to your amended examination start times.

General Guidance
- The Applied Basic Sciences (ABS) paper will start at 9.15am (BST); The Principles of Surgery in General (PoSG) paper will start at 1.30pm (BST). Please ensure you know the time difference between your location and the UK and Ireland.
- In the ABS paper, there will be a break after either 90 minutes or 90 questions have been completed; candidates will need to have answered the first 90 questions in the first 90 minutes of examining time.
- The ABS paper is divided into two 90-minute sections with 90 questions each to allow for a comfort break during the middle of the examination. Candidates must complete the first 90 questions in the first section as you will not have the opportunity to revisit these questions during the second section when you will be presented with the remaining 90 questions.
- The break will last for a maximum of 10 minutes, but candidates can resume the exam after less than 10 minutes if they wish. Candidates can also choose not to take a break at all and continue with the second section of the exam immediately if they wish.
- The break is the only time candidates are permitted to leave the view of their camera.
- There is no break in the PoSG paper.
- Candidates with extra time allowance will have a break in the ABS paper after 90 questions or half of the time available to them. Candidates with 25% extra time allowance will start the ABS paper at 8.30am, and candidates with 50% extra time allowance will start the ABS paper at 7:45am. **All candidates** will start the PoSG paper at 1.30pm (BST).
- Candidates with extra time allowance will not receive a break in the PoSG paper.
- No paper, pens or pencils can be used by candidates during the examination, unless otherwise agreed as a reasonable adjustment with the examining college.
- There is a notepad function within the application that will allow candidates to make any notes they need to in order to answer particular questions.
- Candidates are also able to use functions within the application to highlight question text and change font size.

ExamMonitor™
Virtual Test Proctor

Exam Day Guide for Exam Takers

✔ Do ✔

- Make sure your device meets the **Minimum System Requirements**
- Download the Examplify™ application and test your device's camera and microphone
- Reserve a quiet, **well-lit space** with a comfortable chair
- Close all applications and web browsers and turn off your phone
- Follow instructions provided

✖ Don't ✖

- Leave the View of the Camera
- Use Unauthorized Materials
- Move in an Unusual or Excessive Way
- Use External Devices
- Look Away from the Screen
- Have Other People in the Room
- Wear Hats, Head Coverings, or Headphones
- Speak or Have Any Background Noise

For any questions or concerns, contact your test provider before the day of your exam.

✔ ExamSoft

Section 5: Examination Guidance

In advance of the examination day, candidates must read both:

- Suspected Candidate Misconduct for MRCS and DOHNS
- Investigation of anomalous behaviour in online exams

These documents can be accessed here:
https://www.intercollegiatemrcsexams.org.uk/mrcs/mrcs-regulations-and-formal-documents/

Please ensure that you have read the Exam Day Guide for Exam Takers on the previous page and the following points to ensure that you follow the regulations for this examination.

- Failure for your eyes to be visible on the video or failure to adhere to the potential violations in the 'Don'ts' list could lead to your result being annulled but your attempt still counting.

- Speaking, talking and **reading questions and answers aloud** are not permitted during the examination.

- Candidates' ears should be visible throughout the examination.

- Any candidates who use a hearing aid should contact the exams department at their respective college to inform them of this in advance of the examination.

- Candidates should not use any paper, pens, pencils or make notes during the exam, unless otherwise agreed as a reasonable adjustment with the examining college.

Please also use the following guidance to assist with your lighting set up.

✔ Do ✔	✖ Don't ✖
Light in front of you	Light behind you
Window in front of you	Window behind you
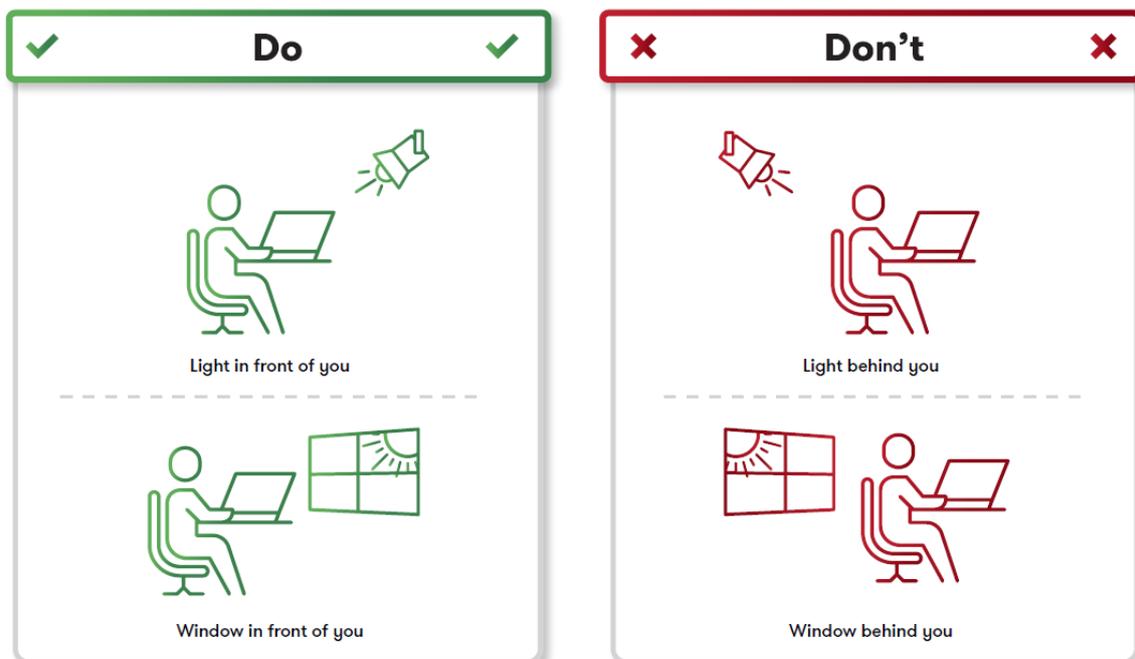
Examination Day

> At the start of the examination, when the software verifies your identification by taking a photo of your face only, please hold official photo identification (e.g. passport, driving licence, national ID) **below** the facial recognition area. This ID should not obscure your face and we will be able to verify this if it is outside of the facial recognition circle indicated.

1. Once you have successfully received your examination password, either by email from your college or from accessing the password site (https://eps.examsoft.com/icbse) you are permitted to start your examination.

2. Open the Examplify software on the device on which you will be taking the examination. Select the MRCS Part A ABS 1 examination file and enter the password that you have received. **You should close all other programs on your computer before starting the examination.**

3. Please read the pre-assessment notices very carefully as by clicking next on the following screens you are agreeing to the examination regulations. Once you have read the pre-assessment notices and clicked 'next' your examination will automatically start. Please ensure that you are ready to begin your examination before selecting 'next'.

4. ExamID will attempt to verify your identification against the baseline photo that you previously set up during the mocks. You will then enter the examination and your face will be recorded for the duration of the exam time.

5. Throughout the examination, you must check that your face is still visible on the video recording by clicking on the '**Monitoring**' pulldown button at the top of the screen, as shown below. Please ensure that you check this view at regular intervals to ensure that your face, and most importantly your eyes are visible throughout the examination.
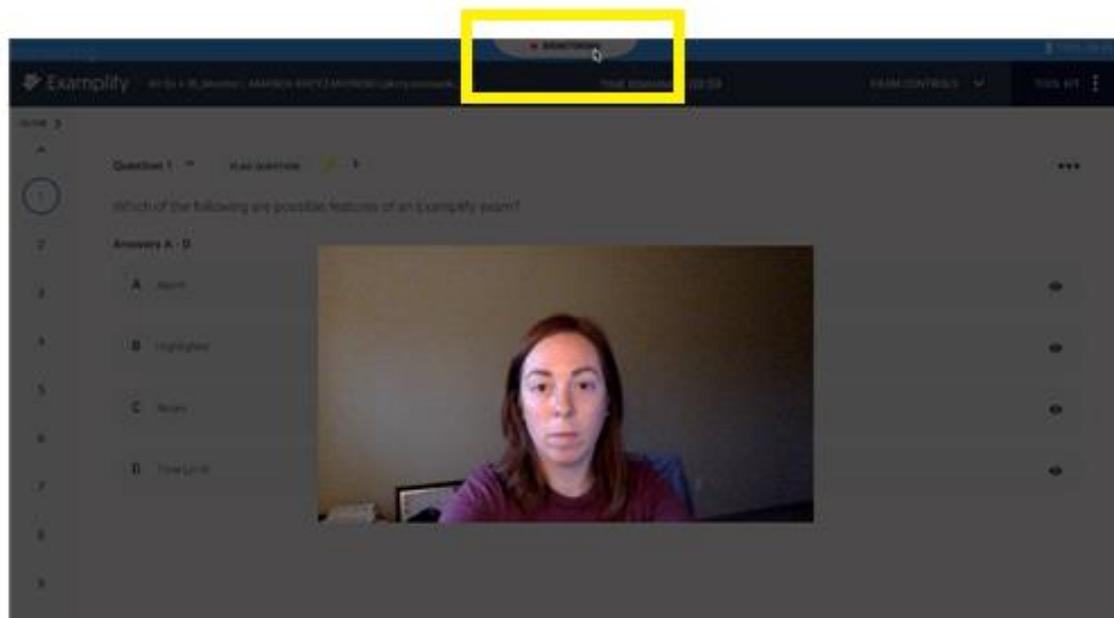
6. Please ensure that you select answers within the examination by clicking on the grey box that contains that item text, after which the box should become outlined in blue and the system should indicate that you have selected this as your answer, as pictured below.

Currently Selected : A

| A | Got it! | ✓ |
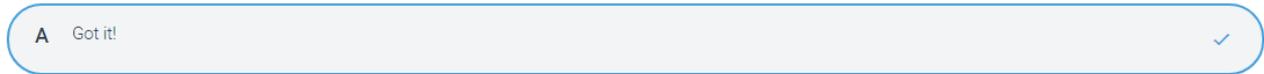
7. There is an icon at the end of each answer option that allows you to strike out any answers that you have ruled out. **Do not click this button to select your chosen answer**. This is an **optional feature** and does not need to be used. Please see the screenshot below which demonstrates the difference between the strikethrough (A, C & D) and answer selections. In this example, answer B has been selected as the chosen answer.

Question 1 ∨   FLAG QUESTION 🖍 >   •••

Which of the following are possible features of an Examplify exam?

Currently Selected : B

A	~~Alarm~~	🚫
B	Highlighter	✓
C	~~Notes~~	🚫
D	~~Time Limit~~	🚫
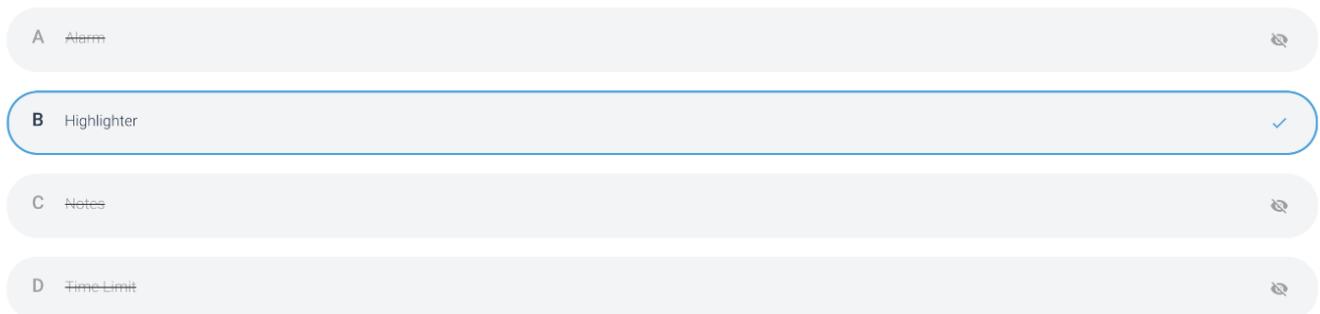
8. Within Examplify you will be able to see the time remaining at the top of your screen throughout the examination. You can also use the tool kit on the right hand side of the system to set your own alarms to help manage your time. In the tool kit you can also utilise the notes, calculator, highlighting feature and adjust text size. These features will be available in the mock examinations to enable you to familiarise yourself with them ahead of the examination day.

9. At the end of your examination please click the 'Finish' button and tick the box to submit your examination answers.
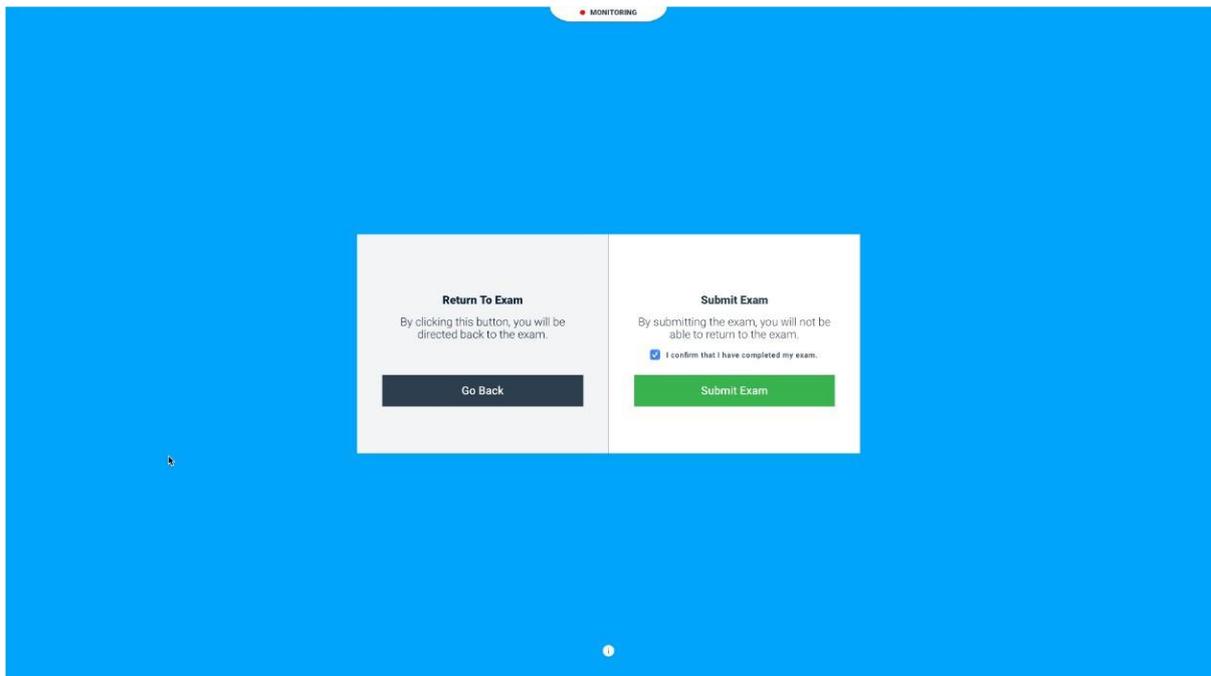
10. You should then see a screen which indicates that your examination answer files are uploading.
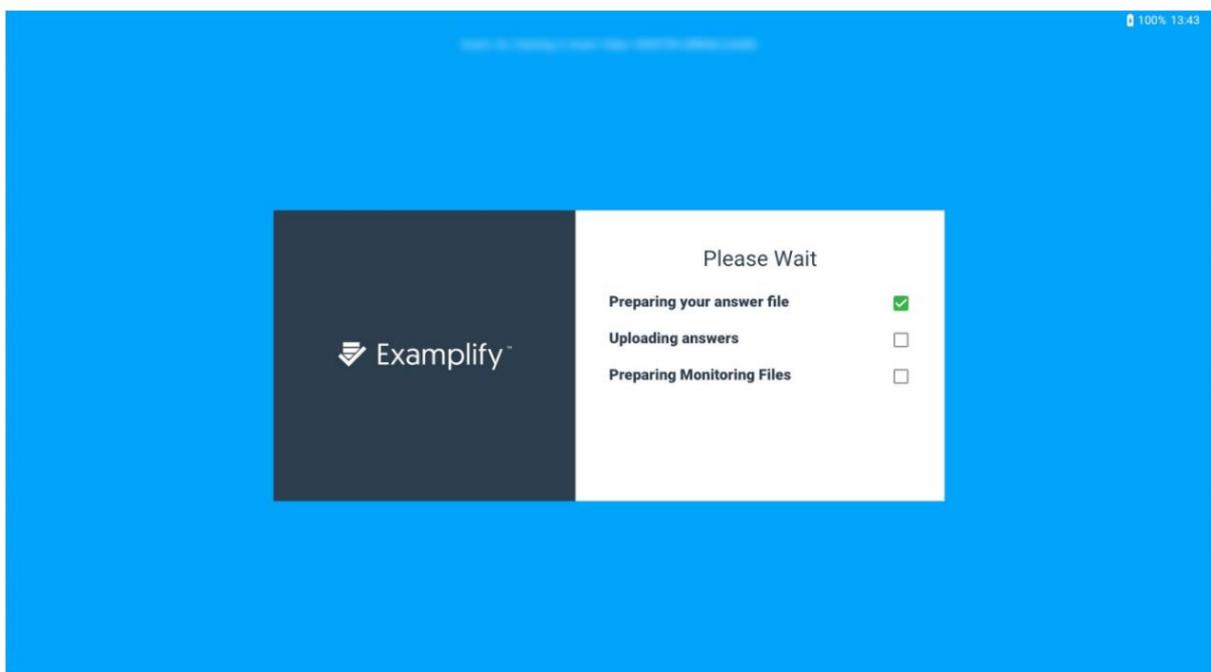
11. Once the examination answer file has uploaded the ExamMonitor video file will take a little longer to upload and you may see this screen:
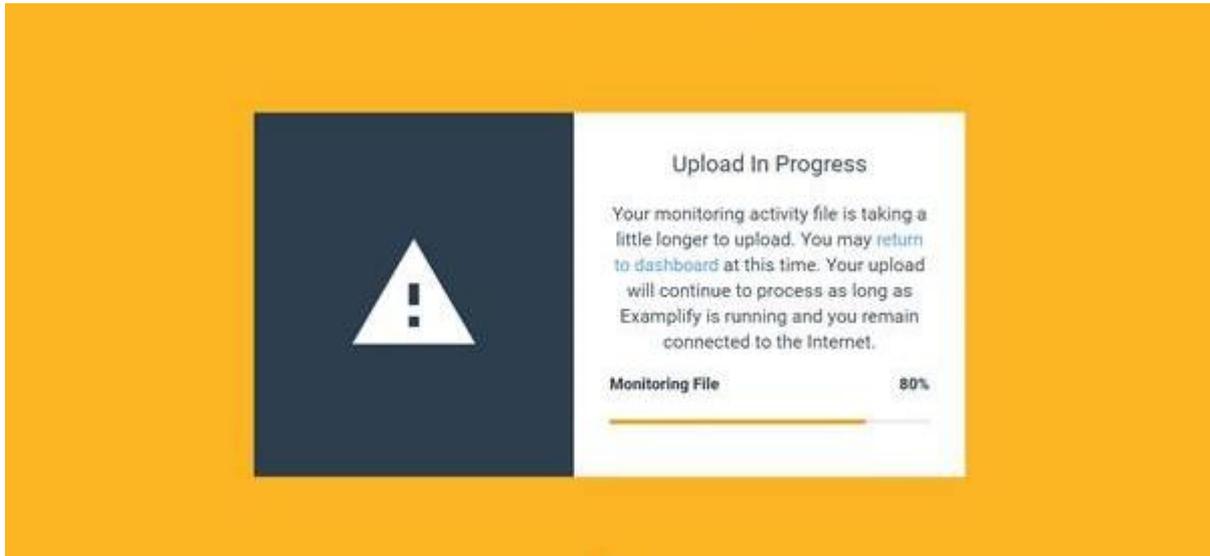
12. You will have until midnight (BST) at the end of the examination day to upload all three sets of examination answer and video files so if you have problems uploading any of these during the day, please continue sitting all parts of the exam and wait until the end of the day to complete the uploads.

13. After you have finished the ABS 1 examination you will have a maximum of 10 minutes in which to take a comfort break before you must begin the ABS 2 examination that contains the remaining 90 questions for the morning paper. You may take less than 10 minutes for this break if you wish and you can also opt to take no break at all and start the next paper immediately.

14. The password for the ABS 2 paper will be the same as the password that you entered for ABS 1. Please follow the same steps again to complete the ABS 2 paper. Once this is finished you can take a lunch break before receiving the password for the afternoon paper.

15. The password for the PoSG paper will be different and you should receive this by email at 1pm (BST) when it will also go live on the password site (https://eps.examsoft.com/icbse). Please follow the same steps again to complete the PoSG paper.

16. At the end of the day once you have finished sitting all three papers please leave the Examplify software on with your device connected to the internet until all examination answer files and ExamMonitor video files have been uploaded. You can check on the ExamMonitor Dashboard screen for any files that are still pending upload as this will be specified underneath each exam title along the left hand side.

17. You should also receive a confirmation email from ExamSoft once your ExamMonitor video files have been successfully uploaded to the system.

18. In the days following the examination please look out for emails from your college in case there have been any issues with your file uploads. You should also receive a link to complete a candidate feedback questionnaire on this examination.

Section 6: Support

Technical support is available to candidates on the day of the examination from staff at ExamSoft who can be contacted using one of the numbers indicated on this webpage: https://examsoft.com/contact. Calling ExamSoft on one of these numbers will be the fastest way to receive help from them on the day of the examination. Alternatively you can scroll down to the Self Service section of this page and navigate to the live chat function. Please note that if you do not receive a response to a local number you can also use the international number for telephone assistance: +1 954 429 8889 ext. 1

College staff will also be on hand to support you on the day of the examination and if you are having problems commencing the examination you can contact the college with which you are sitting.

If you have any problems entering the examination or any technical issues during then you might be prompted to enter a resume code. An outline of the different types of resume code can be found here: https://examsoft.force.com/emcommunity/s/article/ExamID-and-ExamMonitor-Resume-Code-Image-Chart

If you have technical problems during the examination and are prompted for a resume code please email your college with a screenshot of the message you received and they will provide further guidance.

Note: *if you have problems entering the examination and start it a few minutes late you will still receive the full time permitted to answer the questions. However, it is important that you try to adhere to the outlined schedule as failure to sit the examinations within an hour of the scheduled start time will result in the examination being automatically deleted from your device.*

As detailed in the examination day steps in this guide it is the candidate's own responsibility to upload their examination answer files and ExamMonitor video files on the day of the examination before midnight (BST). However, if severe technical issues prevent this from being completed by midnight then your examining college will work with ExamSoft to assist you in the resolution of such issues in the days following the examination.

Section 7: FAQs

Exam Location

Where can I sit the exam?
You should give serious thought to the location where you will sit your exam. You are best placed to identify a suitable location within your area where you can sit your exam. It is important that the venue is:

- Quiet;
- One in which you will not be disturbed during the whole period of the exam;
- Comfortable and well lit; and
- One with good, reliable Wi-Fi.

This might be your home or it could be your work environment. It is acceptable to choose to sit the exam in your home, but if you are doing this it is mandatory that you are alone and in a room where you can guarantee you will not be disturbed. The strict proctoring, or invigilation of the exam means that any interruptions may be reported and investigated as a security breach. It is vital that you can concentrate on the exam in the same way that you would in an exam hall. You should not attempt to sit the exam at home if you have caring responsibilities for anyone in your home, unless you have made arrangements for additional help that day.

If your home location is not going to be suitable, we recommend that you consider booking a room for use at your place of work or at a postgraduate training centre. The criteria above should apply to the chosen room. We know that it can be difficult to secure a room where you are confident you won't be disturbed and for that reason you may wish to enlist the support of a clinical supervisor to ensure that you have an appropriate venue. This individual would not have to invigilate the exam (this will happen online as explained later) but they should ensure that the booked space will be completely quiet and you won't be asked to move to another room or to be disturbed. This is simply a suggestion and it is for you to make your own arrangements and cover any costs.

You should check with your IT department if you intend to sit at a venue at work, or using a device supplied by your employer, as security measures may affect the download and running of the examination.

Can I sit the exam in a room with other candidates?
No, it is not possible to have several candidates in one room attempting the exam. You should be alone in the exam room.

Preparing for the examination

What computer equipment will I need?
In order to sit the exam you will require a laptop or personal computer with an integrated camera or attached webcam. This will enable the exam to be invigilated throughout the exam. You will be unable to sit the exam if you cannot be recorded on your device. If you are using a laptop you should ensure that this is fully charged and plugged in for the duration of the exam.

Can I use a second screen?
No, you cannot use a second screen for your laptop or PC.

Can I wear headphones/earbuds and listen to music or use noise-cancelling headphones to help me to focus?
No headphones/earbuds are permitted during the exam period and candidates' ears should be visible throughout the examination. No music or noise is allowed in the exam room.

Is there a mock or practice exam available?
Yes – please use the instructions provided in this guide to complete the mock exams. Both mock exams are mandatory so you can familiarise yourself with how the screen and exam paper will look on the actual exam day, and also to establish baseline identity parameters through an automatically generated image of your face.

Is there a test or any way to check my system is competent and compatible?
Yes – the minimum system requirements are included in a link on page 3 of this guide. You can also check your download speed using one of the proprietary apps available.

How will my reasonable adjustments be accommodated?
If you have already correctly registered your reasonable adjustment (for example; for visual impairment, dyslexia or other specific learning difficulties, etc) these will be accounted for. Please contact your College if you require clarification.

When will the exam material be available to download?
The Exam will be available for download at least 48 hours prior to the start of the exam. You will be notified when the exam is available for download via email. You should download the exam(s) onto your device a minimum of 24 hours before the exam is due to commence so that there is sufficient time to address any technical queries.
Although you will have the exam on your computer, you will not be able to open the file until the password is released when you are at your seat in your exam room. This will be approximately 30 minutes before your exam start time.

Examination Day

What am I allowed to bring into the examination room?
You may bring a small transparent bottle of water into the Examination. This must remain on the exam table at all times, as any movement off screen - or if you are out of view even briefly - at any time will be noted by the proctor/invigilator and referred for investigation. Mobile phones, smartwatches and other electronic devices are **not allowed** in the exam room with you.

What time should I log in to take the exam?
We recommend that you arrive in your exam room at least 30 minutes early to allow ample time to log into the ExamSoft system and go through the verification of identity process. When the examination is ready to start, you will need to enter with the examination password, which will be provided to you by email. Please note, this password is case-sensitive, and will need to be entered exactly as shown.

How does the online proctoring work?
ExamID will verify your identity when you login. At the start of the exam, ExamMonitor will begin recording video and audio files. This will happen without the need for Wi-Fi. Your device will be locked and you will not be allowed to access any files, internet, apps, or other information during the exam. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that your face is in full view for the duration of the examination and this can be checked using the monitoring icon indicated on page 12 of this guide. When the exam is completed, the video and audio files are automatically uploaded when your device reconnects to the internet, along with answer files and will be stored securely within ExamSoft.

What happens if I lost internet connectivity during the exam?
Don't worry if you lose Wi-Fi connection during the exam as your answers will still be recorded. Wi-Fi connection is only necessary to download the examination at the start of the paper and to upload the answer files once the examination has been completed. It is your responsibility to ensure you have sufficient working Wi-Fi to be able to download the exam and to upload answers once the exam is complete.

What if I experience a technical problem during the exam?
If you experience an issue during the exam you will need to contact either ExamSoft support via the contact details included on page 16 of this guide, or the college with which you are sitting the examination.

What happens if I need to take a comfort break?
You can only leave the examination room to go to the toilet during the programmed breaks between the 90-minute sections of the MRCS Part A ABS paper, or in the time between the MRCS Part A ABS and PoSG papers. If you leave your desk at any other time, this will be noted by the proctor and referred for investigation.

How will I know how much time is remaining on the exam?
There will be a clock on screen at all times and there will be a warning alert to advise you when five minutes of each section remain; candidates can set up their own further alerts through the delivery platform.

How can I give feedback or raise concerns about particular questions in the exam?
Feedback on questions will be recordable via an online survey sent after the exam.

How do I submit my answers once my exam is finished?
Once the examination is complete, Examplify will automatically upload your answer file along with the video and audio recording of your exam. You will need to keep your computer connected to the internet with Examplify until you receive verification that the upload is complete. Once this is successfully completed, you will be able to log out of Examsoft.
If you lose internet connection during the exam, keep your Examplify page open as your answers will be uploaded automatically on resumption of your Wi-Fi signal. It is your responsibility to ensure you have sufficient working Wi-Fi to be able to download the exam and to upload answers once the exam is complete. Please note, once the exam time limit is complete, you will not be able to get back into the exam to update or change your answers.