
Setting up the test center

Office layout and environment

Test centers are required to provide a distraction-free, secure testing environment with continuous candidate surveillance. If your test center is already administering exams, the layout of your office is probably sufficient. If you are setting up a new test center, the exact layout will vary depending on the physical space available and on the number of candidates that will be accommodated. For more information, or for assistance in planning a new testing area, contact your local Pearson VUE office.

The following minimum requirements must be met when setting up a testing room:

- ❖ Provide an enclosed, professional environment that is clean, comfortable, smoke-free and conducive to testing.
- ❖ Provide adequate lighting, ventilation and comfortable seating and work surfaces. Place testing workstations on a clean surface that is approximately four feet (1.2 meters) wide, with no obstructions overhead or underneath. Monitor positions should be adjustable in order to allow each candidate to establish a comfortable testing position. Room lighting should provide sufficient light for keyboard and erasable noteboard while avoiding screen glare.
- ❖ Separate candidates within the testing room. Separate testing stations using walls or privacy partitions, or at least four feet (1.2 meters) of empty space on all sides.
- ❖ Disallow use of equipment such as printers, fax machines, copiers or telephones while testing is in progress.
- ❖ Minimize noise and distractions during testing. Refer to the next section, "Providing a quiet testing environment," for tips.
- ❖ Provide a clear glass viewing window or wall, video surveillance system or seating for a test administrator within the testing room. Whichever surveillance method is used, it must allow an *unobstructed* view of each candidate within the testing room.
- ❖ Provide a separate area outside the testing room for checking in candidates, with a workspace for the testing administrator and seating for candidates who are waiting.
- ❖ Provide lockers or other suitable storage for personal belongings. The candidate cannot take items such as pagers, paper, books

and briefcases into the testing room. Provide adequate parking and/or access to public transportation.

- ❖ Provide access to people with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (in the United States) or your country-specific requirements.

Provide a quiet testing environment

Testing can be a stressful experience for many candidates. Even minor noises near the testing room can cause a candidate to feel distracted. This section provides information on actions your test center can take to minimize distractions. Refer to “Office layout and environment” in Chapter 4 of the Policies & Procedures Guide for additional information on minimizing noise.

Location of testing area

Place the exam delivery workstations in a dedicated room that can be closed off from the rest of the office space. It should be in a low-traffic area away from any training rooms in use, to avoid the sounds of students talking and moving to and from the classroom. Also avoid placing the testing room near an area where people gather, such as a student cafeteria or busy corridor.

Insulation

Insulate the testing room to minimize noise. In addition to insulated walls, an insulated ceiling will help minimize noise. Using fabric-covered partitions between workstations will create privacy and will also absorb sound.

Administrator station location

The computer that will serve as your administration workstation must be located in an area that is accessible for checking in candidates because you need to use the Site Manager/Admissions Manager application, which is part of the Pearson VUE Testing System. You can either place the administration workstation so that it is convenient for checking in candidates, or you can run Site Manager on a workstation other than the administration workstation.

Work surfaces

Pearson VUE recommends that you place exam delivery workstations on a work surface that is approximately four feet (1.2 meters) wide.

Storage for candidate belongings



Candidates are discouraged from bringing any personal belongings to the test center, since these items must be stored in a secure space and are not permitted in the testing room. A personal belonging is any item a candidate brings to the test center that is not either permitted by the exam sponsor's policies or pre-approved because of an accommodation. These belongings are not allowed due to security reasons—for example, candidates could hide notes in a purse or briefcase or send out information about an exam via cell phone.

The secure space your center provides for candidate belongings can be any space in which candidates cannot access the belongings during the exam and in which the items will be safe. If your test center has lockers, you can assign the candidate a locker and key. If lockers are not available, you can have the candidate place belongings in a locked room or lock the items in the administrator's desk during the exam.



Center-owned, locked backpacks work well for storage. Candidates know their belongings are safe at their feet, but they cannot access them during the exam. You can unlock the backpack after a candidate returns the erasable noteboard and pen.