

GLAARG VEC

Greater Los Angeles Amateur Radio Group VEC

Remote Sessions

GLAARG Remote Exam FAQs

1. **Come back and read these FAQs periodically – things are moving fast and there are changes to the procedures almost daily as we gain experience. The software that we use to administer exams is also changing, and so are the instructions to examinees.** Changes we've made in the past few days will be highlighted in **this color**. Changes we've made within the last week or are super important will be in **bold font**.
2. Instructions to examinees are here:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hHUpTy3d_nCZuFFpe_m4P1QJDiLOSaTM/view?usp=sharing
3. GLAARG is the first VEC to offer large scale remote exam sessions. By large, we mean over 30 people tested in a day, 100s overall, and open to signups (not by invitation only). One of our VE teams just conducted a remote session where they tested 61 examinees in one session!
4. Remote testing has been legal for a long time!
See this recent bulletin from the FCC: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-20-467A1.pdf>
5. All of the current remote sessions use ExamTools.org to administer, authenticate and control the sessions. The core exam administering software is very stable and reliable, and has been in use for many years.
6. Registration for the sessions is via <http://hamstudy.org/sessions>, not by email or phone calls.
7. **To minimize confusion and delays, once you start this process please do not make any changes to your license information if you are upgrading, and if you have a change pending, e.g. vanity application, your application might be processed faster if you wait until that process is completed before registering for a session through hamstudy.org.**
8. The Session Registration software interfaces to the FCC's Universal Licensing System (ULS) to allow you to register for an FCC Registration Number (FRN) as part of registering for an exam. You could also get an FRN before you register for a test session. Register and receive an FRN here: <https://apps.fcc.gov/coresWeb/publicHome.do>
9. An FRN is required to take a remote exam – SSNs are never used for Remote Testing. Make sure you have an FRN!

10. Registration for a particular session, on a particular day, returns a PIN that is uniquely associated with a registered examinee.
 - We do not use a “wait list” – a PIN is **required** to take an exam
 - The session is not open to registration once the session begins or when it reaches a maximum size.
 - We have no way to move a PIN issued for one session to another session. If you register and miss your session, you’ll have to register for another session.
 - **If you don’t receive these things by the night before the exam, please email us! (It might have gone to your SPAM folder, because we send these out to a lot of folks at once, and some email hosts consider that SPAM).**
11. After you register:
 - Before the exam, we will email you a License Application, Form 605 to sign electronically. Please do this timely, because if you haven’t signed it before the exam, the exam team might not allow you to take the exam. They cannot submit your test results without having your electronically signed Form 605. Once you sign the form electronically, it will be available to the exam team – you don’t have to email it back to them. When you get the email to sign, it will guide you through the electronic signing process.
 - A day or two before the exam, we will email you final instructions, including a link to the Zoom Session.
 - Before the exam, we will send you an invoice for the exam fee.
12. The remote exams are scheduled for a range of times, and no one has a reservation for a specific time. It may say 10am, but look at the range of times for the session.
13. We use the Zoom Meeting platform. The latest releases of Zoom have improved and we’ve had no security problems. If you have an old copy of Zoom, please update it before the exam.
14. The actual time to take the exam is about 10 to 15 minutes – but the wait time can be hours – it’s first come/first served, in the order that examinees connect to Zoom.
15. We rely on the names displayed for people in the Waiting Room to see if they are actually signed up for a session – we use their name and PIN, so it’s imperative that examinees set their screen names BEFORE they come into the Waiting Room. The procedure is:
 - Bring up the Zoom Application (not in the web browser, so not by clicking on the Meeting link) – you should download the Zoom application first, then name yourself in the Profile. If you’re using someone else’s Zoom, please make sure to change the Profile before you Join the Meeting.
 - Click on the small “gear” on the upper right.
 - Choose Settings, Profile, and change your name to Last Name and PIN, so like Goodkin 0070.
 - Now, after you’ve changed your name, click on the Zoom Meeting link, or bring up Zoom and enter the meeting by providing the meeting number and password.

- We will communicate the position in the queue by sending a string of 4-digit numbers to everyone in the 2-way chat room. The numbers will be the PINs. So, know your PIN, and let us know your PIN.
16. Please don't email us or phone us if you can help it – we can't take or answer calls at the moment – there are too many people trying to take remote exams, so calls are going to voice mail and emails are waiting for answers. Please just register or don't register. If you must send us an email or leave a voice message, we will answer you when we can, but it could be days before we reply.
 17. Don't bother to phone or email with questions about when we're going to put up more exams – when we put them up, they'll be there. We only put up sessions when we know we can staff them with VEs. GLAARG VEC is a small VEC, and we don't really have the resources to alert you personally when new sessions are available. So, please don't ask us to let you know when there are more exams.
 18. Software and procedures are changing, so we have to periodically take a break from testing to get reorganized or test new processes. As it is, we do a lot of "in flight repairs" – so please be patient.
 19. Don't confuse signing up for an account on hamstudy.org, with REGISTERING for a Exam Session using <http://hamstudy.org/sessions>. These are two entirely different things. Registering for an account on hamstudy.org does not get you into remote testing, but it is a great way to prepare for the exam! Here's how to use hamstudy.org:
https://noji.com/hamradio/study.php#recommended_study_method
 20. **Please be sure you're ready to pass the exam.** We've seen a 10% failure rate in our first two weeks of remote testing. That's really a pity to have 20 VEs volunteering their time, and other examinees turned away, because someone couldn't take the time to be sure they could pass – this is not a place to "see if you can pass the exam" – there are plenty other resources for that. And please don't see if you can "go for the next level" if you haven't made certain you can pass. We mean 100% certain, not the kind of certain that comes from passing a few practice exams.
 21. Study tips to make sure you can pass are on this website:
<https://www.qualitymatrix.com/hamclass/pre-class-instructions-for-exams-after-june-30-2018/>
Remember that taking a bunch of practice tests lets you see just a small number of questions – there are 420 possible questions and you only see 35 at a time in a practice exam, so it could be a long, long time and 100s of practice exams before you see all the questions. We never want to hear, "Oh, I never saw that question!" (but we have).
 22. If you're not 100% sure you're going to pass (and you can't be sure if you just take practice exams), you can use hamstudy.org. Here's how:
https://noji.com/hamradio/study.php#recommended_study_method
 23. See the Blog describing what we've been up to: <http://blog.hamstudy.org>
 24. **When you join the Zoom Meeting, we will bring you into a Welcome Room, where you can chat with us. We will assign you a sequence number, based on when you joined the**

Zoom Meeting. From there, we will either send you into a Test Room, or a Pre-check room.
