



The information in this document should be read together with the RSS examinations syllabus

For further information please contact:

Professional Affairs and Examinations Manager

Email [exams@rss.org.uk](mailto:exams@rss.org.uk)

Telephone 020 7614 3915 (international (+44) 20 7614 3915)

Fax 020 7614 3905 (international (+44) 20 7614 3905)

<http://www.rss.org.uk/exams>

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# Contents

Introduction	2
Examination structure	3
Ordinary Certificate	
Higher Certificate	
Graduate Diploma	
Entry requirements	
Calculators	6
Statistical tables	8
Statistical formulae	8
Registration period	9
Registering for the examinations	10
Withdrawal from the examinations	12
Examination entry certificates	12
Notification of results	13
Publication of results	13
Payment details	13
Examination centres	14

## Introduction

The Royal Statistical Society is a learned, professional and examining body with a worldwide membership. It was established in 1834 and was granted its Royal Charter in 1887.

The Society provides a forum for all who are interested in statistics. It publishes a journal which is internationally recognised, it organises meetings throughout the United Kingdom (and occasionally abroad) covering the different areas of statistics, and it publishes Significance magazine and a news and features website, StatsLife. The StatsLife website also includes a [job vacancies section](#).

The Society has around 7000 members, around a quarter of whom are based outside the UK. There are approximately 1300 professionally qualified members.

In January 1993, the former Institute of Statisticians merged with the Society. The examinations which were previously run under the Institute's name are now run by the Society. The examinations are organised at three levels – Ordinary Certificate, Higher Certificate and Graduate Diploma. The Graduate Diploma is equivalent to a good UK Honours Degree in Statistics and is widely recognised as such by employers and by universities for entrance to postgraduate study. Holders of the Graduate Diploma are automatically eligible for the status of [Graduate Statistician](#) (GradStat) upon application. After five years of suitable professional training and experience, a GradStat may apply for the full professional qualification of [Chartered Statistician](#) (CStat). This is the highest professional grade within the Society.

All prospective candidates need to obtain a copy of the syllabus from the [examinations section](#) of the Society's website. Information on [entry fees](#), [reading lists](#), [past papers and solutions](#) are also available.

The Society is not a teaching body, so does not offer any courses leading to its examinations. However, [distance learning tuition](#) for the Ordinary Certificate and Higher Certificate is available from the Department of Social Statistics at the University of Southampton. Distance learning material is also occasionally offered by other providers, and taught courses are occasionally available; the Society can provide any details of these.

**Please note that the examinations will be withdrawn after the May 2017 session - [www.rss.org.uk/exams-faq](http://www.rss.org.uk/exams-faq)**

## Examination Structure

The examinations are held once each year, usually in the third or fourth week of May. Examination centres are available in the UK and in many other countries throughout the world. Candidates are issued with an examination entry certificate which includes a detailed timetable for the papers they have entered to sit. The exact starting times for each examination may vary from one centre to another, so candidates need to check their entry certificate carefully. The examinations are conducted in the English language so it is important that all candidates have adequate proficiency in English.

The pass mark for each paper is 50%.

### **Ordinary Certificate in Statistics**

The Ordinary Certificate of the Royal Statistical Society is offered in a modular form with two modules. This gives the opportunity for candidates to proceed at their own pace. The object of this first level certificate is to provide a sound grounding in the principles and practice of statistics with emphasis on practical data collection, presentation and interpretation. It is intended both as an end in itself in terms of being a first qualification in statistics, and as a basis for further work in statistics, as for example in the more advanced levels of the examinations. The individual modules are also intended to be valuable free-standing elements in their own right - for example they could be useful components of a formal or informal continuing professional development programme. Candidates are assumed to hold a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in mathematics or an equivalent qualification, or relevant work experience.

Candidates may enter for either or both modules at any examination session. Candidates may re-sit any module any number of times; the highest mark achieved will stand. The pass mark for each individual module is 50%. Module marks are "banked" without time limitation.

Each module is examined by a 3-hour written paper containing from 7 to 9 (inclusive) questions of different lengths. There are no restrictions on the number that may be answered. The marks available for each question are printed on the examination papers. Candidates will be advised of their marks for each module taken. Candidates will receive a separate certificate for each module in which they are successful.

Candidates who are successful in both modules (not necessarily in the same session) will be awarded the Ordinary Certificate in Statistics. The Ordinary Certificate will only be awarded on the first occasion when a candidate becomes eligible for it. If a candidate, having been awarded the Ordinary Certificate, takes either or both modules again, advice of the marks earned will be issued and, if appropriate, a certificate to indicate success in the individual module(s); but the Ordinary Certificate itself will not be re-awarded.

### **Higher Certificate in Statistics**

The Higher Certificate is offered in a modular form with eight modules. This gives the opportunity for candidates to proceed at their own pace. The Certificate is both an end in itself in terms of being a qualification in statistics at a more advanced level than that of the Ordinary Certificate, and as a basis for further work in statistics. In addition, the individual modules are valuable free-standing elements in their own right; for example as useful components of a formal

or informal continuing professional development programme.

Candidates may enter for any number of modules, either singly or in any combination, in any examination session. Candidates may re-sit any module any number of times; the highest mark achieved will stand. Module marks are "banked" without time limitation.

Each module is examined by a 1½-hour written paper containing four questions, of which candidates are asked to answer three. Candidates will be advised of their marks for each module taken. Candidates will receive a separate certificate for each module in which they are successful.

Candidates who are successful in **six** modules **including modules 1 to 4** (not necessarily all in the same session) will be awarded the Higher Certificate in Statistics. The Higher Certificate will only be awarded on the first occasion when a candidate becomes eligible for it. If a candidate, having been awarded the Higher Certificate, takes any module(s) again or takes any further module(s) not already taken, advice of the marks earned will be issued and, if appropriate, a certificate to indicate success in the individual module(s); but the Higher Certificate itself will not be re-awarded.

Candidates who wish to proceed to the Graduate Diploma in Statistics are advised that familiarity with the material in Modules 1 to 6 of the Higher Certificate will be expected.

## **Graduate Diploma in Statistics**

The Graduate Diploma is offered in a modular form with five modules. This gives the opportunity for candidates to proceed at their own pace. The Graduate Diploma as a whole is a qualification in applied statistics at a level equivalent to that of a good UK Honours Degree in Statistics. It is widely recognised and respected as such, nationally and internationally, by employers in the public and private sectors. It is also widely recognised by universities as being sufficient for admission to an MSc course in Statistics. In addition, the individual modules are valuable free-standing elements in their own right; they may for example be useful components of a formal or informal continuing professional development programme.

Candidates may enter for any number of modules, either singly or in any combination, in any examination session. Candidates may re-sit any module any number of times; the highest mark achieved will stand. Module marks are "banked" without time limitation.

Each module is examined by a 3-hour written paper containing eight questions of which candidates are asked to answer five. Candidates will be advised of their marks for each module taken. Candidates will receive a separate certificate for each module in which they are successful. Candidates who are successful in **all five** modules (not necessarily all in the same session) will be awarded the Graduate Diploma in Statistics. The Graduate Diploma will only be awarded on the first occasion when a candidate becomes eligible for it. If a candidate, having been awarded the Graduate Diploma, takes any module(s) again, advice of the marks earned will be issued and, if appropriate, a certificate to indicate success in the individual module(s); but the Graduate Diploma itself will not be re-awarded.

Transitional arrangements are in place for candidates who successfully completed part of the previous non-modular version of the Graduate Diploma which was offered for the last time in 2009, so that they may transfer to the modular version with credit given for work already completed. Any such candidates should contact the Society for advice.

## Entry requirements

There are no formal entry requirements for any of the levels of the examinations. The Society's view is that responsibility for entry to the examinations at an appropriate level rests with the candidate.

As mentioned above, candidates for the Ordinary Certificate are assumed to have a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in mathematics or an equivalent qualification, or relevant work experience.

In the case of the Higher Certificate, the syllabus for each module assumes knowledge of the material in the Ordinary Certificate in Statistics, or equivalent. Candidates should ensure that they are familiar with this material before sitting any modules. This is particularly important for candidates planning to attempt several modules in the same session. Candidates are advised that the general level of the material in the Higher Certificate is similar to what is likely to be found in the first year, and perhaps the start of the second year, of an Honours Degree programme in Statistics at a UK university (with the usual shift of one year to accommodate the academic structure in Scotland). Candidates are strongly advised to consult the [syllabus](#) for further information, including on the advised academic progression through the modules, and for information about the required mathematics background. Candidates are also strongly advised to consult the [published past papers and solutions](#) for further guidance.

In the case of the Graduate Diploma, the syllabus for each module assumes knowledge of the material in modules 1 to 6 (inclusive) of the Higher Certificate in Statistics, or equivalent [note: the previous non-modular version of the Society's Higher Certificate in Statistics, offered for the last time in 2008, is equivalent]. Candidates should ensure that they are familiar with this material before sitting for any modules. This is particularly important for candidates planning to attempt several modules in the same session. Candidates should not regard the Graduate Diploma modules as being fully academically separate from each other, because there are many interactions between branches of the subject at this level. In all cases, study of one module may require some study of work in other modules. Candidates are advised that the general level of the material in the Graduate Diploma is similar to what is likely to be found in the final year of an Honours Degree programme in Statistics at a UK university, and this includes work in appropriate mathematics at a commensurate level. Candidates are strongly advised to consult the [syllabus](#) for further information and for information about the required mathematics background. Candidates are also strongly advised to consult the published [past papers and solutions](#) for further guidance.

There are a few courses, both in the UK and overseas, that are formally accredited by the Society as being equivalent to part of a level of the Society's examinations. Those who have passed such courses may complete that level by taking only the remaining modules; if they are successful in those modules, the appropriate Certificate or Diploma will be issued (though "pass with credit" or "pass with distinction" will not normally be conferred by this route). Prospective candidates who think they might have qualifications from such accredited courses should [contact us](#) for advice, before registering for examinations. Apart from recognition of formal accreditations of this kind, the Society does not operate any system of exemptions.

**Please note that the examinations will be withdrawn after the May 2017 session.**

## Calculators

Candidates are expected to make appropriate use of electronic calculators in the examinations. It is the responsibility of each candidate to bring a suitable calculator to the examination and to ensure that it is in good working order.

Scientific calculators are permitted in all the examinations, but to ensure fairness to all candidates, the use of calculators with sophisticated graphical and other facilities is not allowed. Detailed regulations governing calculators are given below.

Invigilators are instructed to prevent the use of calculators that appear to contravene the regulations. If you feel that there is any possibility that your calculator may not be regarded as acceptable, you should take along a more basic model as a back-up.

When considering how to present results obtained from use of calculators, candidates should appreciate that examination questions do not normally focus solely on statistical calculations. Rather, calculations arise naturally in the context of solving statistical problems. Examiners expect candidates to understand the rationale behind required calculations, to be able to carry them out and to be able to interpret the results in the context of the practical problem being dealt with. Candidates are therefore strongly advised to indicate methods lying behind calculations, as examiners seek to award credit for use of correct methods whenever appropriate, even if numerical results are incorrect.

### Detailed regulations

Candidates may use electronic calculators in all the Society's examinations subject to the following conditions.

- Calculators must be silent, must have visual display only and must be battery or solar powered. Candidates are not permitted to make use of external power sources for their calculators.
- The screen must not be capable of showing more than two lines of output.
- Hand-held personal computers are not permitted.
- Calculators with any of the following facilities are **not** permitted:
  - full alphabetic keyboard (including combined alphabetic and numeric keypads as found on mobile phones); but this ban does **not** apply to calculators with hexadecimal features that involve keys labelled A to F (these keys may also double as memory locations) – such calculators are permitted
  - capacity to display graphs
  - printing
  - capacity to retrieve, manipulate or display text or formulae (apart from the names of mathematical functions, and error or other system messages)
  - data banks
  - dictionaries or language translation
  - communication with other devices or the internet
- Candidates may not bring instruction manuals for calculators into the examination room.

**Examples of acceptable and prohibited calculators are shown on the next page.**

## Acceptable calculators

Examples of permitted calculators are shown below. Note that the keypad may contain digits, arithmetic operations and a selection of scientific functions; a "hexadecimal" calculator is also included among the examples. However, the keypad may not be a full alphabetic one, and the screen must have no more than two display lines.



## Prohibited calculators

Examples of calculators which would **not** be permitted are shown below. Some have screens capable of displaying graphs, and some have full alphabetic keyboards. Please note that smartphones with a calculator function will also **not** be permitted.



## Statistical Tables

The Society provides statistical tables for use in the examinations which have been specially prepared for this purpose. **No other statistical tables may be used** in the examinations.

A set of tables will be supplied to each candidate in the examination room. **Candidates may not bring their own copies.** The copies supplied in the examination room must not be taken away.

The tables are available to [download from our website](#), or from the Society as an e-mail attachment. Sets of tables supplied in this way are clearly watermarked ("Not for exam use") to show that they may not be taken into the examination room. All candidates are strongly recommended to obtain a set of the tables and to familiarise themselves with their content and layout.

## Statistical Formulae

The Society does not provide any kind of "formulae sheet" for use in its examinations.

Candidates should appreciate that there are certain details (definitions, formulae and the like) that they are expected to memorise. Definitions of all concepts relevant to the syllabus for an examination are expected to be known. In respect of formulae, the following illustration will make clear our approach. This is of course only an example. Consider the probability function for the binomial distribution. A candidate who does not know this formula cannot fully understand the binomial distribution. It is therefore expected that candidates are able to quote it whenever it is relevant to a syllabus. Similar examples can be given for other areas, such as formulae for sample variance and conditional probability (at Ordinary Certificate level), and sums of squares for appropriate analysis of variance models (at higher levels); such formulae are expected to be known. Very detailed formulae, or formulae relating to very specialised areas of a syllabus, are sometimes quoted within a question, especially at the higher levels of the examinations.

Candidates are advised to consult [past examination question papers and solutions](#) for general guidance on the extent of material that is expected to be memorised.

## Registration Period

Registration for the examinations in May 2016 opens on **1 October 2016** and closes on **1 March 2017**. Please note that 1 March is a strict deadline for registration and late entries will not be accepted, apart from the special facility set out in the next paragraph.

Exceptionally, a special facility for late registration is available until 1 April 2017 for candidates to sit examinations **at the London examination centre only**. There is an **additional charge of £250** for this facility, in addition to all other fees. The additional charge is non-refundable under any circumstances (nor may it be held over and set against fees for the next examination session as described under "Withdrawal from the examinations" below).

Candidates who wish to use the late registration facility should [contact us](#) for further information.

**Please note that the examinations will be withdrawn after the May 2017 session.**

## Registering For The Examinations

**Registration for the examinations is web-based – please visit [www.rss.org.uk/exams](http://www.rss.org.uk/exams), click through to the registration page and follow the instructions.**

### **1. Candidates who are not Fellow members of the Society**

Candidates who are not members of the Society will be registered for the examinations they wish to take and simultaneously enrolled as Examination Associates. They will receive StatsLife e-news bulletins, Significance magazine and have access to the Society's meetings for the period of their enrolment. Enrolment as an Examination Associate will automatically cease on **31 July** in the year of the examinations which were registered for. Examination Associates who wish to take examinations in any subsequent year will need to re-register in the usual way.

### **2. Candidates who are already Fellow members of the Society**

Any Fellow of the Society is entitled to take examinations. The Fellow must have paid the subscription for the calendar year in which the examinations are to be taken.

The usual registration procedure applies to Fellows (in particular the registration deadline) with the following amendments.

- (i) Fellows need to register for the examinations they wish to take but will not be simultaneously enrolled as Examination Associates, as they already enjoy full rights by virtue of their membership status.
- (ii) In view of (i), Fellows do not pay a composite fee covering registration and enrolment as an Examination Associate. The entry fee for Fellows is a lesser amount covering registration for the examinations only. Fellows will need their membership number when registering online to receive the lower rate.
- (iii) The status of being a Fellow does not automatically cease on 31 July in each year.

### **3. Candidate who are not already Fellows of the Society, who wish to take examinations and to receive the Society's Journal (as well as *Significance* magazine)**

Candidates who are registered as Examination Associates receive StatsLife e-bulletins and the magazine Significance but do not receive the Society's journal. Any candidate who also wishes to receive the journal is welcome to [join the Society as a Fellow](#), and may then use the procedure under section 2 above.

The process of joining as a Fellow needs to be completed before registering for the examinations so please allow ample time, particularly in respect of the 1 March exam registration deadline.

## **Exam entry fees and confirmation of entry**

Details of [entry fees for 2017](#) are available from the Society's website. The fees are slightly higher for candidates outside the UK, due to the operational costs for overseas centres. There are also reduced fees for candidates sitting their examinations in countries classified as an [Economically Developing Area](#) (EDA).

Each candidate will receive an e-mail to confirm that their registration has been processed. A reference number will be issued to each candidate. If the candidate has registered for examinations in a previous year, the reference number should be the same as that used before. The candidate's name and the reference number need to be quoted in any subsequent correspondence.

Any candidate who has not received this notification within two weeks of submitting their registration should check urgently with the Society in case of loss in transmission. The Society cannot be responsible for the consequences of any such loss.

<p><b>Please note the final registration deadline of 1 March 2017</b> (apart from the late registration facility at the London centre).</p>
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## **Data collection**

The RSS will retain your personal data for the purpose of processing your exam registration, confirming the date, time and venue for your exams and sending your results.

## Withdrawal From the Examinations

Candidates who withdraw from the examinations **by 15 March** will receive a refund of the part of their fee which covers registration for the examinations. The part of the fee which covers enrolment as an Examination Associate will not be refunded; enrolment as an Examination Associate and receipt of publications will continue until 31 July.

No part of the fee will be refunded to candidates who withdraw from the examinations after 15 March.

Notice of withdrawal must be received by the Society (email or fax acceptable) by **15 March**. A notice of withdrawal will be acknowledged by the Society (by email whenever possible). Any candidate who has not received this notification two weeks after submitting the notice of withdrawal should check **urgently** with the Society in case of loss in transmission. The Society cannot be responsible for the consequences of any such loss.

No part of the fee will be refunded to candidates who fail to attend the examinations, except in cases of illness or other exceptional mitigating circumstances. Documentary evidence such as a medical certificate will need to be submitted to the Society. If the Examinations Board considers the circumstances to be satisfactory, it may allow the fee already paid to be refunded. This decision is at the discretion of the Board. The Board will not enter into correspondence in respect of its decision.

[The additional charge for the late entry facility (see above, under "Registration period") will not be refunded under any circumstances.]

## Examination Entry Certificates

After registration has closed, a certificate will be issued to each registered candidate, confirming the examinations they have entered to sit and the location of the examination centre. A detailed timetable will also be included. This certificate and timetable will be sent by e-mail, usually towards the end of April. It is therefore important to let us know if your e-mail address changes, so we are able to keep in contact with you. If you have not received your examination entry certificate by the end of April, **please [contact us](#) immediately**.

The entry certificate will need to be presented to the person in charge at the examination centre when the candidate attends to take the examinations, together with an appropriate form of identification.

## Notification of Results

The Society will notify candidates of their results individually by post, approximately twelve weeks after the examinations have taken place. **Results will not be released or discussed over the telephone, nor will they be sent by email.**

The decision of the Society, based on the recommendation of the Examinations Board, is final and the Society will not enter into correspondence about examination results. However, a re-mark facility is available until 31 August in each year – please [contact us](#) for more information.

## Publication of Results

The pass list for each year's examinations is published in the autumn on the StatsLife website.

Any candidate who does not wish his or her name to be included in the published pass list should advise us accordingly (e-mail acceptable) by no later than **31 July** in the year that the examinations are taken.

We occasionally receive requests for confirmation as to whether a named individual has passed our examinations. We will respond to such requests, providing permission to release the information has been received from the candidate. Examples are a university in respect of admission to higher study and an employer or potential employer. The Society's response will be confined to a factual statement of pass or fail, including "pass with credit" or "pass with distinction" where appropriate, and the year in which this occurred. We will not issue a transcript to any third party without explicit permission from the candidate.

## Payment Details

Payment in the UK may be made by credit or debit card (via our website), cheque (payable to The Royal Statistical Society), or by invoice raised to an employer.

Payment from overseas may be made by credit or debit card (via our website), sterling bank draft or international money order (payable to The Royal Statistical Society), or by electronic transfer of funds.

The Society's bank is:	The Royal Bank of Scotland plc London, Drummonds Branch 49 Charing Cross London SW1A 2DX United Kingdom
	Sort Code: 16-00-38
	Account number: 00248573
	IBAN number: GB90 RBOS 1600 3800 2485 73

## Examination Centres

Centres where the examinations have been held in recent years are shown below. It is likely that these centres will continue to be available, though this cannot be guaranteed, especially for centres outside the UK. The Society will allocate each candidate to the centre that appears to be most convenient.

If there is no examination centre in your country, please [contact us](#) for further advice.

### United Kingdom

Belfast, Bristol, Exeter, Glasgow, Jersey, London, Newcastle, Newport (Gwent), Sheffield, Titchfield, York.

### Other countries

Anguilla	The Valley	Philippines	Pasig City
Australia	Gold Coast, Melbourne, Sydney	Poland	Katowice
Austria	Vienna	Rodrigues	Port Mathurin
Azerbaijan	Baku	St Helena	Prince Andrew School
Barbados	St Michael	St Kitts	Basseterre
Bermuda	Paget	St Lucia	Castries
Brunei	Darussalam	Singapore	Singapore
Canada	Montreal, Toronto	Slovenia	Ljubljana
	Victoria BC	South Africa	Johannesburg
Cyprus	Nicosia	South Korea	Seoul
Denmark	Copenhagen	Spain	Barcelona, Madrid
Germany	Cologne	Sri Lanka	Colombo
Ghana	Accra	Switzerland	Bern, Zurich
Gibraltar	Gibraltar	Tanzania	Dar es Salaam
Greece	Athens	The Gambia	Banjul
Grenada	St Georges	Trinidad	Port of Spain
Guyana	Georgetown	Uganda	Kampala
India	Bangalore, Mumbai	USA	Birmingham, Alabama
Ireland	Dublin		Memphis, Tennessee
Italy	Milan, Rome		San Francisco
Jamaica	Kingston	Zambia	Washington DC
Japan	Tokyo	Zimbabwe	Lusaka
Kenya	Nairobi		Harare
Lebanon	Beirut		
Lithuania	Vilnius		
Malawi	Blantyre, Lilongwe, Zomba		
Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur		
	Kuching		
Malta	Valletta		
Mauritius	Port Louis		
Montserrat	Brades		
Netherlands	Amsterdam, Rotterdam		
New Zealand	Wellington		
Nigeria	Lagos		