On-screen calculator guide

Candidates at a test centre, or candidates who are taking their examination by remote invigilation where the examination provider is ProProctor must use the onscreen calculator for all CISI multiple choice question examinations in all languages in the UK and internationally.

Candidates preparing for a CISI examination are advised to familiarise themselves with an on-screen calculator, such as the Microsoft one found on all PCs, to aid them in their exam. The following guide explains some of the characteristics of on-screen calculators.

Using the on-screen calculator

Users have several available methods for entering numbers and operators. You can

- Use your computer keyboard's numeric keypad.
- Use your computer keyboard's numeric keys, which are immediately above the letters on your keyboard.
- Click on the numbers on the on-screen calculator keypad.

Frequently used symbols

If you are using the keyboard to input frequently used keys, the following symbols are used:



Division Symbol



Multiplication Symbol



Subtract Symbol



Addition Symbol

Calculator modes

The on-screen calculator has 2 modes: Basic and Scientific. The default mode is Scientific and can be switched to Basic should this be required.

Scientific mode should be used to solve more complex formulas or equations as may be demanded by certain CISI exam syllabi. Basic mode can be used for all simple calculations, such as addition, subtraction, division, multiplication, and simple percentages.

Specific calculations

Percentages

The on-screen calculator behaves slightly differently from most hand-held calculators for the method of calculating percentages. To take a simple worked example, to calculate 5 % of 12,700:

Using the CISI onscreen calculator, the process is

12700 × 5 % =

With some hand-held calculators, the formula is:

12700 × 5 %

The difference is that using the on-screen calculator, pressing "%" causes the calculator to convert the number currently displayed (in this case, 5) to its decimal format: 0.05. The calculation is not complete until "=" is pressed, when the calculator multiplies 12,700 by 0.05 to arrive at 635.

On some hand-held calculators, the calculation is performed when "%" is pressed. Going on to press "=" would take 12,700 and multiply it by 5% of itself (635) to arrive at 8,064,500.

Note: Alternatively, you can use decimals rather than the "%" button. So, in the calculation above:

12700 × 0.05 =

Negative Powers

The on-screen calculator behaves slightly differently to most hand-held calculators for the method of calculating negative powers.

To take a worked example: the calculation of the present value of £100 due in 5 years with an interest rate of 6%.

There are two ways to present this formula:

1. 100 × 1.06 x^y − 5 or
2. 100 + 1.06 x^y 5

Candidates are advised that the second method only should be used for CISI examinations.

Please note that in some learning materials, the function 'x^y' is represented by x^y.