Digital Question Papers: Exam Guide for Centres

Summary of changes

Revision date	Section	Page	Change
February 2022	Hard copies	8	New section

Contents

Setting up for using digital question papers

Hardware requirements

To use digital question papers, your centre will require a PC or laptop or tablet. We recommend that PCs and laptops are running Windows. We recommend that tablets are iPads. Your centre will also require a printer to print candidates' completed digital question papers.

Chromebooks

We asked CALL Scotland to investigate the use of Chromebooks for assessment arrangements, including digital question papers. CALL Scotland's report, published in 2020, is available on the [Chromebook section of the CALL Scotland website](#). The report highlights that currently, there is no satisfactory solution for accessing and using our digital question papers on a Chromebook.

We are actively investigating this issue, but until we have a satisfactory solution, we do not advocate the use of Chromebooks to access and use our digital question papers for the 2022 exam diet.

Software requirements

To use digital question papers, your centre will require an application that can read PDFs. The most widely used free application is Adobe Acrobat Reader. On PCs and laptops this can be downloaded from the [Adobe website](#). We recommend you always have the most up-to-date version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. There are many other free and paid-for applications available for Windows and iPads that can read PDFs.

To use the Microsoft Word digital answer booklets your centre will require Microsoft Word or another application that can read Microsoft Word documents.

Many assistive technology applications are available. These include text-to-speech software, to allow question papers to be read aloud to candidates; and dictation software to allow candidates to speak their responses. Depending on your candidates' needs, you may need to investigate which assistive technology applications you require.

You can find detailed information on setting up Adobe Acrobat Reader on Windows at the [setting up digital exams on Windows section of the CALL Scotland website](#).

You can find detailed information on choosing and setting up an application on iPads on the [setting up digital exams on iPads section of the CALL Scotland website](#).

There's further help and support in using Adobe Acrobat Reader on Adobe's website:

♦ Get started.
♦ Help.
♦ FAQs.

Further help and support in using Microsoft Word can be found via the Microsoft Word support website.

Network requirements

Where you have multiple candidates using digital question papers in an exam, you may wish to consider using PCs, laptops or tablets that are networked. This may help ease administration on the day of the exam by allowing you to set up an exam network and distribute the digital question paper files electronically, rather than having to copy the files from the CD to each individual device. You will require wireless or wired network hardware and software to set up a network.

PDF or Word digital answer booklets

Digital answer booklets are provided in both PDF and Microsoft Word formats. The following considerations may help you to decide which format to use.

PDF advantages
♦ Digital question papers are provided in PDF format only. The same application can be used to access PDF digital question papers and digital answer booklets.

PDF disadvantages
♦ Text does not flow from one page of the answer booklet to the next.
♦ When a page is filled with text the size of the text reduces as you continue to type. To avoid this, the candidate must select the next page and then continue typing.
♦ Editing and formatting tools are limited.
♦ Drawing tools are limited.

Word advantages
♦ Text flows from one page of the answer booklet to the next.
♦ Extensive editing and formatting tools.
♦ Extensive drawing tools.

Word disadvantages
♦ Digital question papers are provided in PDF format only. Two different applications are required to access PDF digital question papers and Word digital answer booklets.

Candidate practice and familiarity

You must ensure your candidates have had time to practise and familiarise themselves with digital question papers well before the day of the exam. They must have experience of using digital question papers in an exam situation, for example during prelim exams. They must be familiar with the PC, laptop or tablet and the software, including any assistive technology, that they will be using on the day of the exam to access digital question papers.

Candidates may wish to practise with past digital question papers. These are available on [our digital question papers website](#).

You may wish to create your own digital question papers for candidates to practise with, or for the purposes of assessment, for example prelim exams. Advice on creating your own digital question papers can be found on the [making digital prelim papers section of the CALL Scotland website](#).

Requesting digital question papers

You must ensure you have requested digital question papers for all candidates who require them in our Assessment Arrangements Request (AAR) system. Requests must be submitted by the date specified in our *Delivering National Qualifications Key Dates* document.

Invigilation

You must discuss the conduct of exams where digital question papers are going to be used with your centre's chief invigilator.

Before the exam day

Receipt of digital question papers

Digital question papers will be delivered to your centre on CD in advance of the exam diet. As with all exam materials, your centre's chief invigilator is responsible for checking receipt of digital question paper CDs and storing them securely in your centre's secure store until the day of the exam.

Security requirements

When setting up and using digital question papers for exams, you must comply with the requirements set out in SQA's ICT Security Checklist.

Designated staff member

You may wish to designate a specific staff member or technician with responsibility for setting up digital question papers and providing technical support during any exams where digital question papers are being used.

Check all hardware is set up

Ensure all the PCs, laptops or tablets candidates are going to use to access digital question papers are in full working order and are configured properly. Ensure your printer is in full working order and you have sufficient supply of consumables — for example paper and ink. Ensure the PCs, laptops or tablets can connect to your printer and print.

Check all software is installed and set up

Ensure the applications candidates are going to use to access digital question papers, and any assistive technology applications, are installed and are configured properly.

Extensive advice on how to setup and use digital question papers is available on the

♦ setting up digital exams on Windows section of the CALL Scotland website.
♦ setting up digital exams on iPads section of the CALL Scotland website.

Set up an exam network if required

You may wish to consider setting up an exam network to manage exams where digital question papers are being used. An exam network may consist of:

♦ A specific exam login for each candidate.
♦ A specific folder for each candidate containing the digital question paper, a digital answer booklet, if required, and any other required files (for example data booklets).
♦ Restricted access to only the specific folder and applications, including assistive technology, required to complete the digital question paper.

Download digital answer booklets, data booklets and prescribed texts

Digital answer booklets are provided alongside the digital question paper on the CD you will receive, where they are required. They are also available to download in advance of the exam day if you wish, along with the data booklets and prescribed texts that are required for certain question papers. For the National 5 Administration and IT exam a digital cover sheet is available. For the Higher and Advanced Higher Accounting exams a spreadsheet or word processing package must be used to complete responses digitally. A digital cover sheet must accompany the responses. You can access all these, along with a list of question papers which have a separate answer booklet, on our digital question papers website.

SCNs

To enable reconciliation of any pages that go missing from a candidate's printed digital question paper or digital answer booklet, the candidate's SCN should be on every page. SCNs can be added manually to each page, or there is functionality to do this automatically.

Digital question papers and digital answer booklets in PDF format are set up to automatically copy the SCN from the front cover to the header of each page in Adobe Acrobat Reader. For this functionality to work you must ensure JavaScript is enabled.

♦ From the Edit menu choose Preferences.
♦ In the JavaScript category check the Enable Acrobat JavaScript checkbox.

The SCN box on the front cover of the Microsoft Word digital answer booklet will have nine zeros and an asterisk.

♦ Replace the nine zeros with the candidate's SCN. Do not delete the asterisk.
♦ On the second page enter the footer area by double-clicking in it, or by going to the Insert menu – Footer – Edit Footer.
♦ Place the cursor anywhere in the string of zeros and update the field by right-clicking and choosing Update Field or by using the shortcut key F9.
♦ Repeat the last step on the last page.

Candidates can be instructed to do this themselves, or you may carry this out for them before the start of the exam.

Multiple choice questions in Biology, Chemistry, Human Biology and Physics

The multiple-choice questions Biology, Chemistry, Human Biology and Physics question papers go through a very specific scanning process when submitted to SQA for marking. To ensure these are scanned correctly, they must be completed by candidates on the physical question paper/answer booklet using blue or black ink.

The answer grids for the multiple-choice questions have been removed from the digital question papers for Biology, Chemistry, Human Biology and Physics to prevent them from being completed digitally. They have been replaced by instructions to complete the grid on the physical question paper/answer booklet.

Spell checking

Unless permitted as part of the candidate's assessment arrangement, spell checking must be disabled. Question and answer digital question papers and digital answer booklets in PDF format are provided in 'spell check on' and 'spell check off' versions for use with Adobe Acrobat Reader on Windows PCs and laptops. For all other hardware and software spell checking must be set locally.

Auto save

Ensure that auto save is switched on in the application that candidates are going to use to access digital question papers. For Adobe Acrobat Reader auto save is accessed via the Edit menu – Preferences – Documents – Save Settings. For Microsoft Word auto save is accessed via the File tab – Options – Save.

Invigilation

Your centre must provide your centre's chief invigilator with the SQA reports detailing the approved assessment arrangements required for each exam and candidate — this includes candidates who are approved to use digital question papers. Your centre must provide the chief invigilator with a copy of your completed ICT security checklist. Your centre must also confirm to the chief invigilator where candidates' digital question paper responses will be printed.

On exam day, before the exam

Check all hardware is set up

Switch on any PCs, laptops or tablets that are going to be used to access digital question papers and re-check that they are in full working order. Switch on any printers and re-check they are in full working order. Re-check that the PCs, laptops, or tablets can connect to the printer and print.

Check all software is set up

Open the applications that candidates are going to use to access digital question papers and any assistive technology applications and check that they are configured properly.

Access to digital question papers

The invigilator is permitted to supply the designated staff member/technician at your centre with the CDs containing the digital question papers up to 60 minutes before the agreed starting time of the exam. The invigilator will remain present while digital question papers are being set up.

Make files available

Copy the digital question paper, and digital answer booklet if required, to the PCs, laptops, tablets, or network folders. Ensure the correct version of the question-and-answer digital question paper or digital answer booklet PDF are copied. The 'spell check on' and 'spell check off versions' are identified in the filename.

Apply and check settings

Apply and check any settings to ensure candidates only have access to

♦ The correct digital question paper and digital answer booklet files.
♦ The applications required to access the digital question paper and digital answer booklet.
♦ The functionality and any assistive technology permitted as part of their assessment arrangement.

Check that files open and software functions

Check that the digital question paper, and digital answer booklet if required, opens and functions correctly, including checking any assistive technology being used.

Hard copies

All candidates using digital question papers will receive a hard copy of the question paper, and answer booklet if required. Candidates may have to answer certain questions or may choose to answer any questions on the hard copy of the question paper or answer booklet. The invigilator will ensure candidates receive hard copies of the question paper, and answer booklet if required.

On exam day, after the exam

Printing

Your centre is responsible for printing candidates' completed digital question papers or digital answer booklets after the exam has finished. Print the digital question paper or digital answer booklet, double-sided where possible, and check that all pages have printed successfully.

You may wish to ask the candidate to check and verify that all pages have printed correctly. You must then pass the printout to the invigilator.

Deleting files

Once the printouts have been passed to the invigilator all digital question paper and digital answer booklet files for that exam must be deleted from the PCs, laptops, tablets, or network.

Digital question paper CDs

All digital question paper CDs must be returned to the invigilator. These will be returned to your centre's secure store until the end of the day. The chief invigilator may then pass the digital question paper CDs to a nominated member of staff at your centre.

Troubleshooting and contingency arrangements

Troubleshooting

I cannot access the files on the digital question paper CD.
- ♦ Try the digital question paper CD on another device if possible.
- ♦ Follow the instructions in the Contingency arrangements section.

Spell checking is switched off when it should be switched on, or spell checking is switched on when it should be switched off.
- ♦ 'Spell check on' and 'spell check off' question-and-answer digital question paper and digital answer booklet PDFs are provided for use in Adobe Acrobat Reader on Windows PCs or laptops. For any other applications, or on iPads, you must set spell checking locally to be on or off as required.

The wrong language is being used for spell checking.
- ♦ The spell-checking language cannot be set on a digital question paper or digital answer booklet file. You must set the language, English (United Kingdom), for spell checking locally.

Text in digital question paper answer boxes or PDF digital answer booklet answer pages is getting smaller.
- ♦ Answer boxes and answer pages on digital question paper and digital answer booklet PDFs are a fixed size. If text fills the box or page, typing any further text will result in the text becoming smaller. If the text is getting smaller before the box or page appears to be full, blank lines may have been added with the return key. Delete any blank lines.

- ♦ The size of an answer box reflects the expected length of a handwritten answer. Candidates should not need to type any more text than can fit in an answer box in a digital question paper.

- ♦ In a digital answer booklet, once a page of text has been filled the candidate needs to select the next page before continuing to type.

The completed digital question paper or digital answer booklet PDF is not printing correctly.
- ♦ In Adobe Acrobat Reader check the print settings — for example Pages to Print is set to All; Page Sizing & Handling is set to Size, and Orientation is Auto or Portrait; Comments & Forms is set to Document and Markups.

Contingency arrangements

If you do not have the required digital question paper CD or believe the CD is faulty and you cannot access the digital question paper files, your centre's SQA co-ordinator must contact NQ

Assessment on 0345 213 6881. NQ Assessment can make digital question paper files available via the SQA Secure site, on the day of the exam, up to 60 minutes before the start time of the exam. Instructions on how to access the files will be provided to your centre's SQA co-ordinator by NQ Assessment.

Further support

SQA

An *Introduction to Digital Question Papers for Centres* and an *Introduction to Digital Question Papers for Candidates* are available. Our digital question papers website contains these guides, past digital question papers, digital answer booklets and other resources.

Our Assessment Arrangements team manages the assessment arrangements request system and provides advice and guidance on assessment arrangements, including digital question papers.

Phone: 0345 213 6890
E-mail: aarequests@sqa.org.uk
Web: http://www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

Our NQ Assessment team produces and distributes digital question papers.

Phone: 0345 213 6807
E-mail: question.papers@sqa.org.uk

CALL Scotland

We work in partnership with CALL Scotland (Communication, Access, Literacy and Learning) on developing and supporting digital question papers. CALL have a website dedicated to digital question papers, providing a wealth of advice and guidance to support you and your candidates in using digital question papers.

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Web: https://www.adapteddigitalexams.org.uk/home/