



# Introduction to Digital Question Papers for Centres

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# What is a digital question paper?

A digital question paper is a digitised version of the question paper that can be completed electronically using a PC, laptop, or tablet. Digital question papers are produced in Portable Document Format (PDF), an open standard file format compatible with many software applications, operating systems, and hardware platforms.

Like physical question papers, digital question papers are either in the combined question and answer format or the question only format. The combined question and answer format digital question papers have answer spaces enabled within the file for completion. The question only format digital question papers have an associated digital answer booklet. Digital answer booklets are produced in PDF format and Microsoft Word format. Both formats have answer spaces enabled within the file for completion.

## Combined question and answer format digital question paper

The image shows a digital question paper page with three questions. Each question has a corresponding answer box and a mark value. A vertical 'MARKS' column is on the right side of the page. At the bottom, there is a barcode and the page number 'page 10'.

10. A database query design includes the following conditions in the search criteria.  
`delivery > 01/05/2019 AND delivery < 31/05/2019`

(a) State the attribute type used above. 1

(b) State the part of the processor where these conditions will be evaluated. 1

11. The programming language below uses `&` to concatenate two strings.  
`SET message TO "hello" & "world"`  
When coding, a programmer types `;` instead of `&` leading to an error.  
State the type of programming error and describe its effect. 2

Type \_\_\_\_\_

Effect \_\_\_\_\_

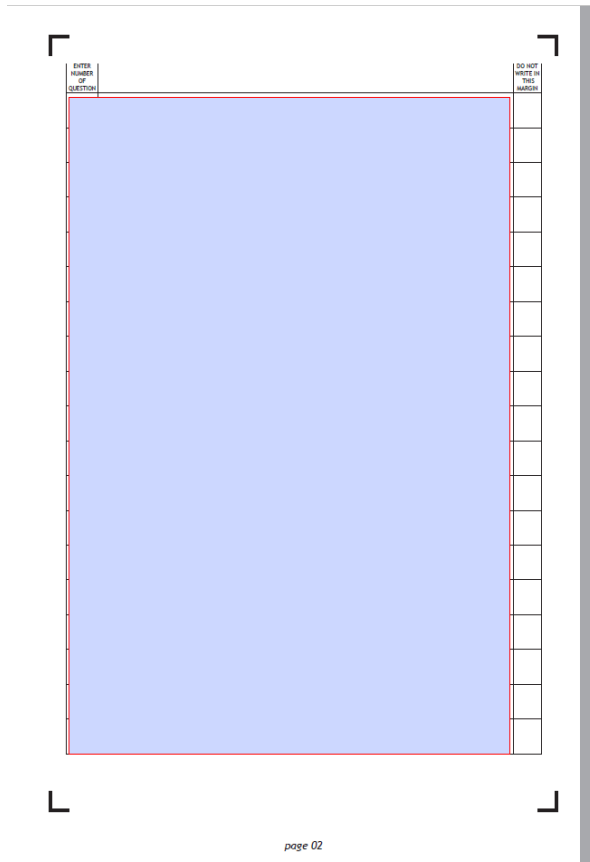
12. The line below is stored as a vector graphic.  
\_\_\_\_\_

State one attribute of this object. 1

MARKS DO NOT WRITE IN THIS MARGIN

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## Digital answer booklet in PDF format



## Who can use a digital question paper?

Digital question papers can only be used by disabled candidates and those identified as having additional support needs who have an approved assessment arrangement. Digital question papers may be suitable for candidates who have difficulty reading the physical question paper or who have difficulty writing their responses on the physical question paper or answer booklet.

Candidates use a PC, laptop, or tablet to access digital question papers. This enables them to adjust the colour of the paper and the text, and, to read and respond to questions, in conjunction with a range of other assistive technologies.

Any candidates using information and communication technology (ICT) to complete their question papers can use a digital answer booklet. Digital answer booklets are available on [our digital question papers website](#).

Further information on assessment arrangements can be found on [our assessment arrangements website](#).

# What hardware and software do my centre need to use digital question papers?

## Hardware

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. Digital question papers must be printed at the end of the exam, so your centre will also require a printer.

## 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

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, but many other free and paid-for applications are available.

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. Depending on the needs of your candidates, you may need to investigate which assistive technology applications you require.

More detailed advice and guidance on hardware, software, and assistive technology can be found on the [setting up and using digital exams section of the CALL Scotland website](#).

## How does my centre request digital question papers?

Digital question papers must be requested using the Assessment Arrangements Request (AAR) system. We issue access details and instructions for using the AAR system to your centre's SQA Co-ordinator each year.

Requests for digital question papers must be submitted by the date specified in our *Delivering National Qualifications Key Dates* document. This enables us to produce, collate, and distribute all digital question papers to all centres in time for the exam diet.

## How does SQA create digital question papers?

We can only begin creating a digital question paper once the physical question paper has been through all its quality assurance stages and has been signed off as approved for the exam.

Our skilled staff use specialist software to convert the physical question paper file into a digital question paper, adding bookmarks for sections, parts, and questions. For combined question and answer format digital question papers, they also create answer boxes and spaces where answer lines or spaces appear in the physical question paper.

Our staff then check the digital question paper against the physical question paper and check that bookmarks are correct, and that answer boxes and spaces have been added correctly. We create two versions of question-and-answer format digital question papers. One has spell checking enabled and one has spell checking disabled.

A similar process is used to create digital answer booklets. We create two versions of PDF digital answer booklets. One has spell checking enabled and one has spell checking disabled. We also create a Word digital answer booklet.

We duplicate digital question paper files and associated digital answer booklet files on CD. We gather all the requests for digital question papers from all centres and collate, package, and distribute the digital question paper CDs to centres in advance of the exam diet.

## How can candidates practise using digital question papers?

Your candidates must

- ◆ Practise using digital question papers, including under exam conditions, before they sit an exam during the exam diet using a digital question paper.
- ◆ Be familiar with the PC, laptop or tablet they are using to access a digital question paper.
- ◆ Be familiar with the software they are using to access a digital question paper, and any functionality within the software they are using.
- ◆ Be familiar with any assistive technologies they are using with digital question papers.

We make all our digital question papers available on our website after the exam diet. As with physical past question papers, these are available for five years. Our digital answer booklets are available on our website. As these contain no confidential question content, they are available permanently, although they may, on occasion, be updated. You can access past digital question papers and digital answer booklets on [our digital question papers website](#). We recommend that your candidates practise using past digital question papers and digital answer booklets.

You may wish to create your own digital question papers. Advice and guidance on this can be found on the [making digital prelim papers section of the CALL Scotland website](#).



# Where can I get further information on digital question papers?

## SQA

An Introduction to Digital Question Papers for Candidates and a Digital Question Papers Exam Guide for Centres 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

Email: [aarequests@sqa.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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.

CALL Scotland

University of Edinburgh

Moray House

Paterson's Land

Holyrood Road

Edinburgh

EH8 8AQ

Phone: 0131 651 6235

Email: [webmaster@callscotland.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@callscotland.org.uk)

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

