Digital Question Papers:

Guidance for candidates

www.sqa.org.uk

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Introduction

This document will give you information about SQA's Digital Question Papers (DQPs). You can find information on other assessment arrangements on SQA's website at **www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements**.

SQA can provide DQPs as an assessment arrangement for disabled candidates and/or those identified as having additional support needs and who need to use ICT. The DQPs are PDF versions of the conventional examination question papers and are available in two formats.

DQPs in 'question and answer' (structured) format

Some conventional question papers come in the format of a 'question and answer' booklet, where you insert your answers. DQPs in this 'question and answer' format have the answer boxes enabled for text input, which means you can type your answers or dictate them using speech recognition software. The size of the answer box, and the corresponding mark, reflect the extent of the expected answer.

Please note that when you are using the DQPs in this 'question and answer' format the text size reduces when you overfill the answer boxes, and you have to be careful not to do this. There is also the danger that text will disappear and will not be printed.

DQPs in 'question only' (unstructured) format

More commonly, the conventional question papers come in the format of a question-only paper, and you would normally have to write your answers in a separate answer booklet. DQPs in this 'question only' format have paper-specific digital answer books into which you can type your answers or dictate them using speech recognition software. You can find the list of current question papers that are 'question-only' and require a separate answer book at Digital Answer Book spreadsheet.

You can use the DQPs to:

♦ type your answers (or dictate them with speech recognition) on screen directly into the DQP or into the digital answer book

♦ change how you display the question paper on screen, eg change the on-screen colour/size of the paper and/or the text

♦ use text-to-speech software to read the question paper or to read back your responses.

If you want to practise using the past DQPs, you can download them from SQA's website at: **www.sqa.org.uk/digitalquestionpapers**. Please note that not all past papers are available in the digital format, but the techniques in using DQPs can be practised using other level/subjects.

Digital answer books for use with DQPs

You only need to use a digital answer book when you are using the 'question-only' DQPs. These will be supplied by SQA on the disc with the DQP in both MS Word and PDF formats. You should read Appendix 1 for information on the advantages and disadvantages of using PDF and MS Word versions of the digital answer books.

The PDF answer books are also supplied in both '*SpellCheck-on*' and '*SpellCheck-off*' versions. However, the MS Word answer books are only supplied in the '*SpellCheck off*' version — it is your own device that controls the MS Word setting. This means that your centre must ensure that the PC's MS Word settings are correct for you. You can only use the spellcheck if SQA has authorised you to use it.

It is essential that you are familiar with the format of the DQPs and digital answer books, and that you have had sufficient practice using them. You must know how to enter your personal details and be able:

♦   to access/read the digital papers and to insert answers and

♦   to save files as you work through the question paper

Please note that when you are using the PDF DQPs, the text size reduces when you overfill the answer boxes, and you have to be careful not to do this. There is also the danger that text will disappear and will not be printed. You must remember that you need to double-tab or click into the next page when coming to the bottom of the answer pages.

If you want to practise using the digital answer books, you can download them from Digital Answer Books. Please note that not all answer books are available in the digital format, but the techniques in using digital answer books can be practised using other level/subjects.

Please remember that when you sit the actual exam, all your examination materials must be submitted to SQA. This includes the print-out of your work, any other word processed work, and any additional written or graphical work you have produced.

Printing your Scottish Candidate Number on DQPs and Digital Answer Books

When you enter your Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) on the front cover of the **PDF** version of a digital answer book, the SCN will automatically be copied into the header of all the following pages. You will need to tab twice to move to following pages.

If you are using the **MS Word** version of the digital answer book and you wish to copy your SCN, it is not automatic and there are additional steps that you must take.

The SCN box on the front page of the digital answer book will have nine zeros and an asterisk and may be enclosed within grey brackets ie **(000000000*).**

You, or your teacher or lecturer will have to:

♦   Replace these zeros with your SCN, making sure that the brackets (if shown) and the asterisk are **not** deleted eg (123456789*).

♦   Then go to Page 2 of the digital answer book and place the cursor in the grey footer area and double click. This will open the Headers & Footers option.

♦   Place the cursor at the start of the zeros to the left of the footer area and whilst it is blinking, press F9.

Your SCN will now appear in the footer of every subsequent page. Alternatively, you, or your teacher or lecturer can enter your SCN into the box in the footer of each page.

Remember: Your teacher or lecturer will set up your classroom and exam PC or tablet. You should only need to insert your details and your answers (as well as saving your work as you go along). However, if you want to set up your own PC or tablet to practice using the DQPs at home, you can find detailed technical guidance on the SQA Digital Question Paper webpage at **www.sqa.org.uk/digitalquestionpapers.**

Appendix 1: Using PDF or MS Word versions of Digital Answer Books

PDF digital answer books: advantages and disadvantages

Advantages

♦ Familiarity: you can use Adobe Reader for both the DQPs and the digital answer books.

♦ Your SCN can be copied automatically from the cover sheet to the header of each page.

Disadvantages

♦ The number of lines and characters that can fit on one page of a PDF digital answer book is restricted and text does not 'flow' from one page to another. Consequently, 'over-filling' answer boxes/pages results in text size being continually reduced.

♦ Editing tools are limited.

♦ You can use Dragon speech recognition, but with limited functionality. Windows speech recognition cannot be used.

MS Word digital answer books: advantages and disadvantages

Advantages

♦ You can use all of the Word formatting, fonts, sizes, styles etc

♦ Text flows from page to page

♦ All speech recognition programs, including the free Windows 7 tools, work

♦ Most writing support tools work better in Word, for example, Co: Writer, Penfriend, ClaroRead, Read and Write Gold, Ginger, Ghotit, etc

♦ Word has better drawing and graphic tools than Adobe Reader. Word 2007 and 2010 have an improved equation editor; see also Microsoft Mathematics

♦ You can type equations with the Word equation editor, and can use add-ons such as Efofex (http://www.efofex.com/) to create equations, chemical formulae etc

♦ **If you wish**, your SCN can be copied from the cover sheet to the footer of every page. Please note that this is not automatic and requires a number of steps to be followed. Please read the technical guidance to find out how to do this.

Disadvantages

♦ You need two different applications to read the DQP and type your answers

♦ If you use text-to-speech, you may have to use two programs: one for the PDF (eg PDFaloud) and another for the Word (eg WordTalk), although some text-to-speech programs can read from both (eg ClaroRead, Read and Write Gold, Ivona MiniReader)