Writing Diploma Exams Using Computers
Humanities Part(ie) A, Mathematics 30-2 and Science 30

BACKGROUND

Examinees are permitted to use computers when writing some diploma exams. The principles, directives, and procedures presented below address the writing of diploma exams using computers.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Computers and word processing applications may be used when administering the Part(ie) A portions of humanities diploma exams (English Language Arts 30–1, English Language Arts 30–2, Français 30–1, French Language Arts 30–1, Social Studies 30–1, and Social Studies 30–2). The use of computers for this purpose must not compromise the security of the exams or fairness of their administration.

A school principal may allow a student who normally produces extended written work on a computer, and who is proficient at using that school's or writing centre's computers and word processing application, to use them when writing any of the aforementioned diploma exams.

Students who choose to use computers and word-processing applications when writing a diploma exam are responsible for ensuring that they understand and follow all of the directives, rules, and procedures established for writing diploma exams in this manner.

COMPUTER USE DIRECTIVES

Principal

1. The principal of a school or designated writing centre shall decide whether to provide the opportunity for students to write humanities Part(ie) A diploma exams using computers. This decision shall be based on the principal's certainty that the school or designated writing centre can comply with all diploma exam writing and administration rules, and with the directives, rules, and procedures that follow.

2. The principal of a summer school or designated writing centre shall notify Exam Administration that he or she will be able to provide this opportunity to students writing diploma exams.

3. The principal shall communicate to students and teachers the availability of and requirements related to the use of computers and word processing applications when writing the Part(ie) A portion of humanities diploma exams.

4. The principal shall ensure that only those students who understand and are able to follow all of the directives, rules, and procedures established for writing Part(ie) A diploma exams using a computer are permitted to do.

5. If a school or designated writing centre has more students who request this option than it has computers, students who have documented learning needs which specify the use of a computer shall be given priority when assigning access for diploma exam writing purposes.

6. If a school or designated writing centre has more students who request this option than it has computers, and it wishes to address that shortage through alternative exam administration scheduling, the principal shall submit a specific written proposal to the Director of Exam Administration for approval.

7. The principal shall ensure that computers used for exam writing purposes do not allow students to access resources such as websites, shared network folders, etc.

8. The use of Quest A+ on student-owned PC and Mac OS devices must be approved by Exam Administration. (See the Quest A+ section, below).

*NEW 9. School-owned Google Chromebooks may be configured for diploma exams. The Quest A+ application or other solutions such as Google Docs may be used with school-owned Google Chromebooks. (See the School-Owned Google Chromebook section, below).

10. The principal shall ensure that all computer equipment, applications, and printers used for diploma exam administration purposes are appropriately configured to safeguard test security and fairness and to minimize distraction to students.

11. The principal shall ensure that all facilities and computer equipment that have been set up for exam writing purposes are secured and remain secured until after the exam writing session and follow-up administrative procedures are completed.

12. Before implementing the use of computers for writing diploma exams, the principal shall establish technical and exam administration contingency plans and emergency procedures to address unexpected issues and problems that may arise.

13. The principal shall ensure that teachers who are designated to supervise the administration of diploma exams that are being written using computers are appropriately prepared for that role, including being aware of and able to implement contingency plans and emergency procedures, should the need arise.

14. The principal shall ensure that no student responses, including rough work, remain on computers or network drives once students have stapled their printed copies into their exam booklets.

Technical Personnel

1. Technical personnel shall configure all computers, word processing applications, and printers so as to ensure the security and fairness of the exam administration (see *Rules and Procedures* below).

2. Technical personnel shall develop and implement a system testing plan prior to each exam administration session to ensure that all equipment and processes function as required (see *Rules and Procedures* below).

3. In co-operation with the principal and exam supervisors, technical personnel shall develop a **technical contingency plan** that can be implemented, as required, to address unexpected network, computer, or printer problems.

4. Technical personnel shall ensure that the facility and all designated and configured computers are secured until the time the scheduled exam is written and, following the exam writing, until all printed work is correctly stapled into the appropriate exam booklets and all computers are cleared of all student work.

Diploma Exam Supervisors

1. Teachers who are designated to supervise the administration of diploma exams that are being written using computers shall be familiar with and able to implement the guiding principles, directives, rules, and procedures related to the administration of diploma exams using computers.

2. Exam supervisors shall develop and implement procedures for the pick-up and distribution of printing during and after the official scheduled exam administration period. These procedures shall safeguard test security and fairness and minimize distraction to students.

3. In co-operation with the principal and technical personnel, exam supervisors shall develop an **exam administration contingency plan** that can be implemented, as required, to address unexpected issues or problems that arise while exams are being written using computers.

4. Exam supervisors shall ensure that students are aware of and understand the rules and procedures for writing a diploma exam using a computer, *and their responsibilities for implementing them*, prior to the commencement of the official scheduled exam administration.

5. Exam supervisors shall ensure that no student accesses the internet or other prohibited online or electronic resources while writing a diploma exam using a computer.

6. Exam supervisors shall ensure that no student responses, including rough work, remain anywhere in the school's computer system or in the school once students have stapled their printed copies into their exam booklets.

Students

1. If a principal allows computers to be used when writing Part(ie) A diploma exams, the decision to participate shall be the individual student's.

2. Students who choose to write diploma exams using school or writing centre computers shall be proficient at using those computers and word-processing applications as a normal means of producing written work.

3. Students who choose to write diploma exams using computers shall be familiar with and *are responsible for implementing* all of required rules and procedures for writing a diploma exam using a computer (see *Rules and Procedures* below).

RULES AND PROCEDURES

Technical and Administrative Set-up

1. Prior to the commencement of the official scheduled exam administration, all computers to be used for exam writing purposes must be networked and configured to:
   - enable secure and ready access to designated printers only, during and after the official scheduled exam administration
   - enable the saving of each student's written work in a manner and/or to a network location that ensures its security during, and permits school personnel to readily access and remove those documents following the official scheduled exam administration
   - disable access to the internet and other online or electronic resources that are **not** permitted.

2. Prior to the commencement of the official scheduled exam administration, all word-processing applications to be used for exam writing purposes should be configured to enable:
   - automatic insertion of footers that include the student's index number on each page of written work
     Note: The index number (test booklet number) is the six-digit number that appears in the bottom right corner of the student's label. Unregistered students will not have an index number, so they must create a six-digit number and place that number on the back of their test booklet.
   - automatic and frequent saving of word documents to a designated location only
   - access to routine tools, such as a spell-checker, that are integrated into the software.
     Note: The "auto correct" feature of these tools must be disabled.

3. Prior to the commencement of the official scheduled exam administration, all computers, printers, and word-processing applications must be online and ready for use.

Exam Administration

1. Students writing diploma exams on computer must be given a paper form of the exam prior to the commencement of the official scheduled exam administration and must staple a hard copy of their word-processed written work to that booklet at the end of the exam session.

2. Students writing diploma exams on computer may access all of the exam materials that are available to students who write paper forms of the exam (e.g., print references such as an English dictionary or authorized writing handbook).

3. Students may revert to writing with pen or pencil at any time during the exam administration.

4. Students may do rough work or planning in whatever manner they choose (i.e., either in the exam booklet or on the computer).

5. Students may print interim hard copies of their written work at any time during the exam administration.

6. Students may compose and edit their written work until the end of the official scheduled administration time.

7. Student may not access the internet or other prohibited online or electronic resources while writing a diploma exam using a computer. To do so is a breach of security.

Preparation and Submission of Written Work

1. It is the **students'** responsibility to print and staple their final written response(s) to their exam booklets. This includes verifying that the final printed hard copy of their writing is accurately and completely printed and attached to their booklet in proper page order. This step may occur after the officially scheduled time limit; however, this verification step does *not* allow any revision to finished work.

    Note: A **mark of zero** will be assigned to any exam **question** or **assignment** that has **no** written response, or the **wrong** written response, attached to it, **for whatever reason**, at the time of marking.

2. Students writing Part(ie) A diploma exams on computer must clearly label each page of their finished work according to its assignment title or question number and must staple the work into the appropriate place(s) in the exam booklet.

3. Each student must include his or her six-digit index number on every page of the finished work stapled into the exam booklet.

4. Students writing Part(ie) A diploma exams on computer must indicate in the space provided on the back cover of the exam that they have attached word-processed pages to the exam booklet.

5. Students writing Part(ie) A diploma exams must submit their final written work double-spaced and in an easy-to-read 12-point font. (See the instruction page in the specific exam for details.)

6. Each student writing Part(ie) A diploma exams must clearly label all word-processed rough work or early drafts as "rough" and must staple these documents into the exam booklets on pages designated "Planning."

7. Final printing and stapling of written responses may occur after the officially scheduled time for exam writing, but **no** editing may be done after the scheduled time.

GUIDELINES

1. Principals of schools or designated writing centres should consider allowing students to write Part(ie) A diploma exam on computer only if:
   • the participating students normally compose extended written work on computer
   • each participating student knows how to use the school's or designated writing centre's computer
   • technical expertise is available before, during, and after exam writing to ensure smooth and secure system functioning
   • security, fairness, and confidentiality will in no way be compromised.

2. Students should be given sufficient time to log on to the computer system and review the rules and procedures for writing Part(ie) A diploma exam on computer in advance of the time scheduled to begin the exam. (It is recommended that students be instructed to arrive at least 20 minutes early.)

3. In the event of an emergency or disruption, contact the Director, Exam Administration, immediately by telephone at (780) 427-0010. For a toll-free connection, dial (780) 310-0000.

QUEST A+

The Quest A+ Application enables secure online exam administration on both student and school-owned PC and Mac OS devices. Its associated locked browser temporarily blocks access to hard drives, network locations, unauthorized applications, and websites. During a secure exam, the Locked Browser ensures only the Quest A+ Application is permitted.

Since the April 2015 diploma exam session, the use of Quest A+ has been capped to 4,000 simultaneous users for any given diploma exam. This is to help ensure the reliability and stability of the application. While Alberta Education is exploring the development and/or acquisition of a new system to better provide students with access to online diploma exams, priority for the use of the Quest A+ Application for Humanities Part A written response diploma exams is given to schools who cannot administer these exams with technology via alternate methods (i.e., exam accounts). Equity of access for school authorities to use the Quest A+ Application is also a consideration.

For example:

- A school has 100 students writing English Language Arts 30-1 and 30-2.
- This school has 80 available PC computers and 20 students have personally-owned PC or Mac OS devices.
- This school could use exam accounts for 80 students and the remainder of the students could access Quest A+ via personally-owned devices.

To apply for your school to use Quest A+ for Part A written response diploma exams, contact Pascal Couture, Team Leader, Digital Systems and Services at pascal.couture@gov.ab.ca or by telephone at (780) 492-1462 (toll-free by first dialing 310-0000). The request should include:

- School Name and Code
- contact person at the school
- how many students the school would like to use Quest A+ for each Part A written response exam
- the reason for using Quest A+ (e.g., student-owned devices)

*NEW The deadlines for requests to use Quest A+ and the confirmation dates are as follows:

Diploma Exam Session	Quest A+ Request Deadline	Confirmation
November 2015	October 1, 2015	By October 16, 2015
January 2016	November 2, 2015	By November 20, 2015
April 2016	March 1, 2016	By March 18, 2015
June 2016	April 1, 2016	By April 29, 2015
August 2016	July 4, 2016	By July 8, 2015

*NEW **SCHOOL-OWNED GOOGLE CHROMEBOOKS**

School-owned Google Chromebooks may be configured to enable secure administration of diploma exams. Online applications such as Quest A+ or Google Docs are examples of word processors that can be managed through the Google Admin Console.

Schools requesting to use Quest A+ with school-owned Google Chromebooks must follow the same criteria and deadlines indicated in the above Quest A+ section.

For more information regarding local configurations of school-owned Google Chromebooks to enable Google Docs to be used for diploma exams, please contact Pascal Couture at Pascal.Couture@gov.ab.ca.

SCIENCE 30

The April administration of the Science 30 diploma will be administered in an exclusively digital format. After the April diploma exam registration deadline (February 24, 2016), Exam Administration will contact schools that have students registered to write this exam and detailed instructions will be provided.

*NEW The Science 30 Diploma exam will be offered in French for the first time in June 2016. This French version of the exam will be administered exclusively in a digital format.

MATHEMATICS 30-2

*NEW The April administration of the Mathematics 30-2 diploma will be administered exclusively in a digital format. After the April diploma exam registration deadline (February 24, 2016), Exam Administration will contact schools that have students registered to write this exam and detailed instructions will be provided.