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

BACKGROUND

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

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Computing devices 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 technology for this purpose must not compromise the validity of the exams or security of their administration.

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

Students who choose to use technology 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 technology. 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 shall communicate to students and teachers the availability of and requirements related to the use of computing devices and word processing applications when writing the Part(ie) A portion of humanities diploma exams.

3. 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 technology are permitted to do so.

4. If a school or designated writing centre has more students who request this option than it has devices, 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.

5. The principal shall ensure that only computers that have been properly configured are used for exam writing purposes with the exception of those used with Quest A+ and its Locked Browser. **Student-owned** PC and Mac OS devices may be used with Quest A+. (See Quest A+ and the Use of Personally Owned Devices, below).

8. In relation to the Quest A+ website, **school-owned** Google Chromebooks are permitted for diploma exams (See *Quest A+ and the Use of School-Owned Google Chromebooks*, below).

9. The principal shall ensure that all computing devices, applications, and printers used for diploma exam administration purposes are appropriately configured to safeguard test security and validity and to minimize distraction to students.

10. The principal shall ensure that all facilities and 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.

11. Before implementing the use of technology 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.

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

13. The principal shall ensure that no student responses, including rough work, remain on devices or accessible network locations once students have stapled their printed copies into their exam booklets.

Technical Personnel

1. Technical personnel shall configure all devices, word processing applications, and printers so as to ensure the security and validity 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 cooperation with the principal and exam supervisors, technical personnel shall develop a **technical contingency plan** that can be implemented, as required, to address unexpected network, device, 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.

5. Following the exam, technical personnel shall ensure that **devices are cleared of all student work and individual devices can no longer access student responses.**

6. Following the test administration, technical personnel **in schools using local word-processing solutions** shall ensure that student work is archived securely for a period of 3 months from the date the exam is written. Archived files must only be accessible to a school authority network administrator.

7. After marking has been finalized, technical personnel shall ensure that all archived student work is permanently deleted.

8. If Quest A+ is used for Part(ie) A, April Mathematics 30-2, or Science 30 diploma exams, the Quest A+ Locked Browser is installed and tested in advance of the testing session. https://questaplus.alberta.ca/help/requirements.html.

Diploma Exam Supervisors

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

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 validity and minimize distraction to students.

3. In cooperation 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 technology.

4. Exam supervisors shall ensure that students are aware of and understand the rules and procedures for writing a diploma exam using technology, 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 search engines, research tools, online dictionaries or other prohibited online or electronic resources while writing a diploma exam using technology.

6. Exam supervisors shall ensure that no student responses, including rough work, remain on any devices or student-accessible network locations once students have stapled their printed copies into their exam booklets.

Students

1. If a principal allows technology 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 technology shall be proficient at using those devices 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 technology (see *Rules and Procedures* below).

4. Students are encouraged to print assignments for written response diploma exams in a single-sided format.

RULES AND PROCEDURES

Technical and Administrative Set-up

1. Prior to the commencement of the official scheduled exam administration, all devices 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 search engines, research tools, online dictionaries 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:

   - 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 processing 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.** For local word-processing solutions, **online dictionaries and online thesauri are not permitted**.

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

Exam Administration

1. Students writing Part(ie) A diploma exams using technology 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 using technology 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 device).

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 search engines, research tools or other prohibited online or electronic resources while writing a diploma exam using technology. 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 using technology 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 using technology 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 using technology 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 using technology 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 using technology only if:
   • the participating students normally compose extended written work electronically;
   • each participating student knows how to use the school's or designated writing centre's network and equipment;
   • technical expertise is available before, during, and after exam writing to ensure smooth and secure system functioning;
   • security, validity, and confidentiality will in no way be compromised.

2. Students should be given sufficient time to log on to the system and review the rules and procedures for writing Part(ie) A diploma exam using technology 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) 492-1400.

QUEST A+ AND THE USE OF PERSONALLY OWNED DEVICES

Schools are permitted to allow students to use personally owned computers (PC or Mac OS) when writing Part(ie) A diploma exams. Due to device management requirements, personally owned Chromebooks or Chrome OS devices are not permitted. When used for exam writing purposes, *Quest A+* and its associated Locked Browser application temporarily block access to hard drives, network drives, and online resources by restricting users to the Quest A+ test environment.

ACCESS TO QUEST A+

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 in conjunction with local word-processing solutions). 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+ using personally-owned devices.

To apply for your school to use Quest A+ and obtain access codes for Humanities Part A written response diploma exams, complete the online request form located at: http://surveys.education.gov.ab.ca/novi/n/QuestDiploma.aspx.

The deadlines for requests to use Quest A+ are as follows.

Diploma Exam Session	Quest A+ Request Deadline
November 2016	October 3, 2016
January 2017	November 3, 2016
April 2017	February 22, 2017
June 2017	April 13, 2017
August 2017	July 4, 2017

APRIL 2017 MATHEMATICS 30-2 AND SCIENCE 30

The April 2017 administration of the Mathematics 30-2 and Science 30 diploma exams will be administered in a hybrid format. Students writing hybrid format diploma exams will receive paper format diploma exam booklets and responses will be entered via Quest A+.
After the April diploma exam registration deadline (February 22, 2017), Exam Administration will contact schools that have students registered to write this exam and detailed instructions will be provided.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON USING TECHNOLOGY FOR DIPLOMA EXAMS

A document, *Using Technology to Administer Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Exams*, is available to assist school and technical personnel with decisions regarding the use of technology for students to write diploma exams. This document will be updated throughout the school year.