

Biology e-exam FAQs

Below is a summary of the questions together with responses submitted during the Zoom meeting on Thursday 7th May 2020.

Question **Could students hide the timer? Some get stressed by a counting clock.**

Answer The timer cannot be hidden.

Question **Will curriculum specific language be in the dictionary or excluded?**

Answer The dictionary is generally there to assist students with common word spellings. Additional words can be added, however it is still OK that students bring in an approved hard copy dictionary if they prefer. As for paper exams, subject specific dictionaries are not permitted.

Question **How do you remove a flag?**

Answer The flag is added and removed by clicking on the flag icon.

Question **Will students have a pen tool to 'scribble' on the source e.g. circle sections on the electropherogram?**

Answer At this point students cannot mark up diagrams, however it is being considered as part of the roadmap.

Question **Does the zoom function stay "zoomed" between pages of questions? For students with dyslexia it would seem that it takes a bit of time to zoom for every page.**

Answer Yes, the zoom does retain across pages until the student changes it.

Question **I'm concerned that a student can click on next without scrolling to the bottom of the page, can they be forced to scroll to the bottom before they are able to change page?**

Answer Whilst we can't (and probably don't want to) control how a student wants to navigate through their exam, we have added in the question title at the top of the page the extent of the question on the page (i.e. Question 1 (a) to (d)(ii)).

Question **If a student has extra time through special provisions, does that change with the little timer at the top of the page?**

Answer Yes, the invigilator can add additional time before the exam starts for students with special provisions.

Question Sources being independent from questions seems to be a bit clunky. What is the benefit of having them independent from the question?

Response We have the option to present in a 'full-screen' view (which we have in this sample), or in this split-screen view. The split-screen view is great when a single stimulus relates to many questions as it remains constant on the page whilst they answer.

Question Is the super and subscript functions important for communication of answers?

Answer The tool bar is standard across all exams and is similar to MS Word. The sub and super script may be useful if students wish to add footnotes, or anything with a mathematical response.

Question I am concerned that children in exam conditions in a heightened state may confuse sources with appropriate questions. Has this been considered?

Answer Every effort will be made to ensure that it is really clear that students need to refer to sources of information and that there is no possibility of confusion between sources.

Question In Microsoft forms you can set a limit on a box for typing in - is there a way it can be designed to limit the size of the box so that it is large enough, but not 'endless'? Might be good...

Answer In paper exams, there is no limit on the length of student answers. They are able to use the back page of their booklet if they wish to continue beyond the lines provided. The expanding text box in the electronic exam provides a similar opportunity.

Question Will the spell check correct Latin words (eg. Scientific names)

Answer The spell check only indicates if a word is spelt incorrectly, or if it is not contained in the dictionary. If the student clicks on the underlined word, possible alternatives will be presented for selection. If the word is subject specific, i.e. is not a common word, it will be indicated as a misspelling but offer not alternative. In this case the student can chose to ignore the notification.

Question Could there be a colour code highlight of the source to the question?

Answer This is an option that we may be able to look into for future examinations. We currently provide text with the question to refer students to the relevant source material.

Question Is there a way to go from split screen to full screen.

Answer Yes, we have added a full screen option for the split-screen template. Students will be able to view either the stimulus, or the question/response panels at full screen. This functionality is not currently available in the sample examinations, however, will be prior to the practice window, and will be communicated.

Question What is the reason for grouping some of the multiple choice questions together on a page rather than a separate page for each (particularly if they are not all referring to the same source/reference material)? Is this just to limit the number of times they need to click between and load different screens?

Answer Yes it really is about reducing the amount of pages to navigate and also ensuring there is a balance between scrolling and page quantity.

Question Does the autosave format include the highlights and the scribbles? What if the student does not delete their scribbling?

Answer Markers are not able to see any mark up by students - highlights/notes, scribble paper, so it is not necessary to remove any of these. Autosave happens every minute, or on a page change.

Question Are we able to provide this sample exam to students as an end-of-year trial exam (in the digital format)?

Answer This sample exam is not able to save responses, so it cannot be used for this purpose.

Question What if students wanted to draw a flow diagram?

Answer Drawing and diagramming is on our roadmap, we just want to make sure we get it right, rather than using something that we have to change in a year or two.

Question When you say roadmap does that mean it will not be available for students this year? or just that you do not have this feature to show us today?

Answer This means it will not be available for this year. We want to make sure that students will be able to practice, so will not provide significant changes once these sample exams are published.

Question A student in last year's psychology exam experienced lag when she returned to her actual response because she has too many scribbling snippets open. Is that a problem with the exam format?

Answer The lag shouldn't be related to the amount of notes, etc. Sometimes there are just random internet related things that can cause a device to slow down. We've had very little feedback about significant performance issues, luckily! School IT Managers conduct performance testing to reduce the likelihood of network related issues, including lag.

Question Are there any SHE questions?

Answer The structure of the exam is the same as it has been in the past. So, yes, there will be questions which assess a student's understanding of Science as a Human Endeavour, as specified in the subject outline.

Question In terms of accessibility will there be an option where the question can be read to students (text to speech) or are we just sticking to the same format and giving students with reading difficulties longer time as per special provisions? Is a text to speech function something on the radar for the future?

Answer We are working with the vendor to ensure accessibility meets WCAG 2.0. Whilst we aren't advertising full compliance this year, I would suggest that your students give it a go with the sample exams and see if it meets their needs.

Question(s) What happens if a student's computer crashes part way through the exam? What happens if the school system crashes and cuts the students from the exam? Are they able to log onto another computer on a different network to recommence?

No paper back up is a bit scary considering our internet at school has been down for hours this week and several times this year. What happens if that happens on the exam day?

I had an issue with a forms SAT. We had a department wide crash which mean the form could not be submitted. Are the questions backed up as they go through the exam? What would happen if we lose internet connection during the exam?

Answer Invigilators will have instructions to follow should this happen. Spare devices are recommended to be available and auto save will have retained whatever work the student has completed up until that time. Should the student be unable to resume work on their exam, then normal applications for exam misadventure would apply.

Question Does SACE have any recommendations of programs we can use to prepare students for e-exams?

Answer For the time being, MS Word, or PDF forms might be a good way to have students work in an electronic format.

Question Can students do the sample exam more than once if ongoing availability?

Answer Yes, the sample exam lives on the SACE website and can be accessed over and over. There is also a great general familiarisation exam on the familiarisation page where students can practice in the template

Question Are there provisions for students if internet access is a concern? I teach in a small rural school and occasionally internet is unreliable.

Answer It is very important that your school makes use of the 'practice window' opportunity in August to ensure that as many of these issues are resolved before the actual examination. Our project team works hard with school IT managers to assess the readiness of the school's infrastructure so that surprises on exam day are minimal.

Question Can invigilators add time due to ICT issues mid exam?

Answer Invigilators will have instructions to follow should this happen.

Question Last year Psych and Modern History had the ability to do trial exams and collect student responses - why are we not able to do that for biology?

Answer Because 2019 was only the second year for electronic exams, the SACE Board used sample exams in those subjects that were part of the testing process. Because the final exams in 2019 had very few problems, that part of the testing process has been completed.

SACE will now provide a generic practice window exam, primarily to test school readiness and provide students with the opportunity to experience exam day prior to November.

There will also be a sample exam to show the 2019 paper Biology exam as it would appear as an electronic exam.

Question Just a thought that if we don't have mark up for 2020, would it be possible for the diagrams to be provided so they could be provided hard copy for students (maybe 1 exam paper provided so diagrams could be used (and collected afterwards)). It really is hugely disadvantageous to not be able to mark up the diagrams to help with understandings?

Answer
feedback.

Hopefully next year we will have the ability to mark up images, thanks for your