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Purpose of exam

The purpose of the accreditation exam is to assess candidates' knowledge and use of the *Australian standards for editing practice*, 2nd ed. The exam focuses on the copyediting sections of the standards and on essential skills such as project definition and the ability to identify legal and ethical issues such as accessibility, defamation, privacy and copyright infringement.

Testing competence

The exam is a test of competence rather than excellence, and candidates who pass the exam are certified as capable of applying the editorial skills described in the standards.

Editing experience

The Accreditation Board recommends that you do not attempt the exam unless you have at least 3 years' full-time editing experience, or equivalent. The sample exams will help you decide whether you are ready to sit the exam.

A word of warning

Any person who attempts to take the exam for another person or enlists the help of others will be permanently disbarred from accreditation.

Content and structure

The exam's content reflects the variety of work that editors do, with examples drawn from various kinds of publishing. The exam consists of three parts:

> The LANGUAGE part
>
> The KNOWLEDGE part
>
> The MANUSCRIPT part.

Please read the information on the website.

Sample exams

The sample exams will help you decide whether you are ready to sit the exam itself.

For additional practice, attempt the other KNOWLEDGE part questions (the ones you didn't do when you worked through the paper under exam conditions), allowing 20 minutes for each.

Registration

Acknowledgement, receipt, photo ID, candidate number

On submission of your application, you will receive a registration acknowledgement followed by a receipt once your registration fee has been received. Although you will not need to produce this receipt on the day of the exam, including it in your bound notes is recommended. You will need to produce photo identification before you can be admitted to the exam.

You will also be issued with a confidential reference number, which you will use instead of your name on the answer documents.

Only you and the exam coordinator will be able to match this number with your name. This is to ensure that the assessors marking the exam papers do not know the names of candidates. This number should be treated like a PIN and kept confidential at all times. Do not use it in any correspondence except with the exam coordinator.

You will receive details about your venue and the time of the exam by email around 6 weeks before the exam.

Special needs

If you have special needs, such as a disability that means you cannot sit for 4 hours at a time, the Accreditation Board will endeavour to accommodate your needs. You should contact your society's Accreditation Board delegate to find the best solution.

If your location or personal circumstances makes sitting the exam at one of the venues prohibitively difficult for you, you can request to sit the exam remotely, if you register and pay by 14 June 2020. This will allow the Accreditation Board enough time to consider your request and plan how to accommodate it.

Please be aware that permission to sit the exam remotely is granted only in exceptional circumstances. If your request is unsuccessful, your registration fee will be refunded in full.

Editing on screen

PCs and Macs

The exam facilities provide PCs for candidates to use in the exam, and technical support for PCs only. You will sit the exam on a PC, unless you specifically request a Mac during registration. No technical support will be available for Macs, and a Mac cannot be supplied on the day if you haven't requested one in advance.

Software

The version of Word used will be Word 2016 on both PCs and Macs. The version of Adobe for the PDF documents will be Adobe Reader (not Acrobat).

Familiarity with Word and PDF skills

The exam is not a test of your ability to use Microsoft Word or PDF files, and knowledge of advanced features of Word is not required.

You'll find detailed information on the Exam [Resources](#) page; see under 'Editing onscreen'.

Macquarie Dictionary Online

The only internet access will be the online version of the Macquarie Dictionary. This will be logged in for you (that is, you do not need your own subscription).

Hard copy of general instructions

You will be provided with a hard copy of the general instructions and specific instructions for each part of the exam. You may use this as your scribble paper. You must not take this paper from the exam room.

Exam day

Invigilators

There will be at least two invigilators at each exam venue. During the exam, they will be able to answer general questions about the exam format and procedure, but not about the content.

They will also be able to obtain help if any problems with the technology arise – for example, if the screen suddenly freezes or you accidentally log out of the Macquarie Dictionary Online.

Critical times

The exam lasts for **4 hours**, including reading time. Candidates should arrive at least half an hour before the exam begins, which means it will be about 5 hours from the time they arrive at the exam venue to the time they leave.

IPEd will send candidates details about exact times once they register for the exam, but this is a rough guide:

- 30 minutes to read the hard-copy instructions, open the exam documents, turn Track Changes on, enter your candidate number in each document and save it under your candidate number, and check that the Macquarie Dictionary Online is logged in and there are no technology issues.
- 30 minutes to read the exam documents and decide which questions to answer.
- 3 hours to complete the exam.

Late arrival

Anyone who arrives after the 30-minute reading period has ended will not be admitted.

What to bring

You will need to bring to the exam:
- photo ID
- your candidate number
- your hard-copy resources and references (bound notes and books)
- writing materials
- a stand-alone calculator.

Entry into the examination room will not be guaranteed if you do not have your candidate number *and* ID. (You could consider printing and binding your candidate number confirmation email into your bound notes to make sure you don't forget them.)

Reference books

The exam is an open-book test, so you may bring along your preferred style guide and other references. Note that your references must be hard-copy texts.

You will need to indicate which style guide you are using in the appropriate place on the exam document. If you use a specific in-house style that is not commercially available, you will have to give a copy to an invigilator so that it can be used to mark your application of the style. This copy will not be returned to you.

Style Manual, *Fit for Print* or a commercially available and easily obtainable style guide such as the *APA Publication Manual* or *Chicago Manual of Style* will not need to be handed to the invigilators at the end of the exam. Just make sure you indicate which edition you are using.

Generally, three references should be sufficient to bring: perhaps your preferred style guide, favourite dictionary if you don't want to use the Macquarie Dictionary Online and an editing handbook or specialist guide.

You may annotate your reference books and use post-it notes to mark sections.

Although the exam is open-book, you may not borrow references or anything else from other candidates during the exam.

Bound notes

You may also bring your own notes but they must be printed and bound – loose pages of handwritten material are not permitted, nor are electronic references such as dictionaries.

Bound notes may include typed notes, photocopied handwritten notes, or photocopies of reference book pages.

You will not be permitted to bring any loose sheets of paper nor any handwritten notes. Your notes must not include extracts from the sample exams.

Permitted bindings

Permitted bindings include:
- comb binding
- wire binding
- thermal binding
- staples along the left-hand side.

Bindings that allow pages to be slipped in and out, such as a ring binder, do not count as bound.

During the exam

Phone

Your phone must be turned OFF (not silent) and placed under your chair.

Watch

Computerised watches capable of storing, receiving or transmitting information or electronic signals will not be allowed in the exam room.

All other watches must be removed and placed at the top of the candidate's table where they can be seen clearly by an invigilator.

Toilet breaks

If you need to go to the toilet during the exam, speak with an invigilator; save your work and minimise your window. The invigilator will note the time you left the room and returned, and will escort you to the toilet.

Interruptions

Should something unexpected happen (power outage), please listen to and obey instructions from invigilators.

Illness

You may also speak with an invigilator if you need to leave the room for any other reason. The invigilator will follow a similar procedure. If you leave the room because of illness, you may not return.

Food and drinks

You may bring snacks, but they must be unwrapped and not be noisy to eat.

No fluids are to be consumed at your workstation. You may drink water from a bottle or container as long it has a secure lid that is kept closed and it is placed under your chair when not in use.

Early finish

To minimise disruption to those who are finishing the exam, no one may leave during the last 15 minutes of the exam.

At end of exam

Once you have finished the exam, you will be asked to check you have inserted your candidate number and to save and close all files, give the instruction booklet and scribble paper to the invigilator, and leave the room.

You may not return to the exam room until all papers have been collected by the invigilators.

Marking

The exam will be marked by IPEd assessors who are all distinguished or accredited editors.

To ensure fair and consistent marking, the assessors follow a detailed marking guide and moderate the exam documents in consultation with each other. The marking scheme will recognise that there may be more than one correct solution to an editorial problem and more than one way to mark up a manuscript.

The pass mark is 80 per cent of the total number of marks available in the exam, and 65 per cent of the marks available in each of the three parts.

Results

The exam is scored either 'pass' or 'fail'. The Accreditation Board will notify you by email of your result within 8–10 weeks of the exam date. However, no documents will be returned.

If you pass, you will receive a certificate stating your accredited status and, if you consent, have your name published in your branch's newsletter and on the IPEd website.

If you do not pass, you will receive a brief report on your performance that will help you identify areas of weakness. You may re-sit the exam once more at a reduced fee at either of the following two exams.

Appeals

Appeals must emailed to the Accreditation Board Chair setting out in detail your reasons for seeking review. Complaints and requests made by telephone will not be accepted.

Against conduct of exam, or special consideration

If you want to make a request for special consideration as a result of something happening on the day of the exam (for instance, because of sudden illness or family problems, or because of a problem with the venue or the conduct of the exam), you must supply a statement of the reasons to the Accreditation Board Chair within 7 days of the date of the exam. The Accreditation Board's decision on whether you qualify for special consideration will be final.

Against results

Appeals against the result of the exam must be accompanied by a fee of two-thirds of your exam fee to cover the cost of the appeal. If the appeal is upheld, the appeal fee will be refunded in full. The Accreditation Board in consultation with the lead writer and lead assessor review your appeal. Candidates will be notified of the outcome within 3 weeks of the appeal being received.

Requests for an appeal must be made within 21 days of the exam results being received by candidates

The board's decision is final.

Tips from AEs who have passed the exam

- Decide what resources you are going to take in and get used to using them effectively.

- Make sure your notes are in an allowed form (bound, not handwritten) and tag the most frequently used pages or sections of your *Style Manual*.

- Make the most of the reading time:

    Don't spend much reading time (if any) on the LANGUAGE part as you will have little choice in which questions to do and the LANGUAGE part should be straightforward if you've done your preparation.

    Choose your KNOWLEDGE part questions using, as far as possible, the summary list of questions – you should be able to tell if you can do a question simply by reading the summary; or at least you should be able to tell which ones you *can't* do. Don't waste time reading the questions you can't do – eliminate them straight away.

    Use as much of the reading time as you can on the MANUSCRIPT part. During this time:
    - try to get a good picture of the overall structure and content of the extract
    - look for the big ticket items, such as heading structure, image and table placement, or missing information
    - don't focus on spelling errors or typos – leave that until you are working through the document as they'll jump out at you at that stage.

- Plan your exam process and go in with a clear plan of attack. Allocate the time you will spend on each question, how you are going to use your reading time etc. Type this up as a plan with times rather than minute allocations (e.g. 2.00–2.30pm: LANGUAGE part rather than LANGUAGE part, 30 minutes) and bind it into your notes.

- If you cannot finish a question in the time you've allowed, leave it and go on to the next question. If you have time left over at the end, come back and try to finish the bits you didn't get to.

- Sort out the maths of each section during reading time – do not forget that passing requires you to accrue enough marks, not to complete each question to perfection. In particular, decide which KNOWLEDGE part questions you will do. Some KNOWLEDGE part questions might have options within them, so you should decide how many and which you can do. Avoid doing 'extra' questions or options that don't count.

- Do the sample exams. Do as many as you can.

- Consider doing a sample exam under exam conditions, i.e. only have with you what you can bring to the exam. Use this time to test your resources for the exam – will they work on the day?

- Swap and mark someone else's sample paper. You will discover they did things that got them marks that you didn't think to do. You will also notice where they lost easy marks. Get together and share all that knowledge with each other.

- Don't stress, and be systematic with your approach. Treat the exam as a job with a non-negotiable 5.00pm deadline for a client who needs you to get as much done as you can in the given timeframe. Keep reminding yourself that you are not going to do a perfect job, and that's OK in this instance.

- Follow the brief you are given and answer the questions as they are asked. In the MANUSCRIPT part, read the brief very carefully and do exactly what is asked. This also applies to the KNOWLEDGE part: if you are asked to give three dot points or suggestions or words as an answer, then give three, not five or seven or two.

- Type up a checklist of what to include in your style sheet for the MANSUCRIPT part and bind this into your notes. Remember that spelling errors are not style decisions and need not be included in the alpha list.

- In the LANGUAGE part you'll show that you can identify and fix errors in spelling, grammar and style. In some areas of the KNOWLEDGE part you have to do the same, but in the KNOWLEDGE part you will be expected to show you understand *why* some of these things are important. So spend some time before the exam thinking about the rationale behind the style conventions you are familiar with – for example, why plain English is important, or how different types of presentation (lists, tables, diagrams, charts, photos etc.) affect the way readers process information.

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