Western Cape Education Department
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Western Cape
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To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors, Chief Education Specialists, Heads: Curriculum Support, Circuit Managers, Heads: Management and Governance, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, Assessment and Examination Coordinators, Subject Advisers, and Heads of all educational institutions that prepare candidates for the National Senior Certificate examinations

Subject: Procedures and guidelines for the November 2024 National Senior Certificate final practical examinations for Computer Applications Technology (CAT) and Information Technology (IT)

1.   The Department of Basic Education (DBE) published Examination Instruction 32 of 2024, dated 15 September 2024, and wishes to draw your attention to the procedures and guidelines that must be adhered to during the conduct of the final practical examinations for CAT and IT.

2.   This minute must be read in conjunction with Annexure G of the *Regulations Pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the National Senior Certificate examination,* published in *Government Gazette* No. 31337 of 29 August 2008, as amended on 30 April 2019.

3.   Health and safety protocols must be observed at all times, where applicable.

4.   Educators and schools must ensure that they have the necessary hardware resources required to offer CAT. (Refer to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), no. 2.4 in particular.)

5.   Educators and schools must verify that the software tools they use to implement CAT and IT comply with the content and skills listed in CAPS for CAT and IT. Examination papers will NOT cater for or be adapted to provide for software tools that do not comply with CAPS or examination guidelines.

6. Prior to the examination, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) will:
   (a) Ensure that all schools offering CAT and IT have been audited and are ready to conduct the practical examinations. Where schools do not have the resources to conduct the examination, the WCED will ensure that adequate arrangements have been made for candidates to write at an alternative venue;
   (b) Have plans in place to provide data files and organise computer centres in preparation for the examinations; and
   (c) Ensure that they have received data files in all the formats compatible to the programs used by all their schools from the DBE.

7. The November 2024 CAT examination makes provision for the following software packages:
   (a) The latest three versions of Microsoft Office (MS Office) will be allowed for examination purposes. For 2024 this will be MS Office 2021 (also known as MS Office 365), MS Office 2019 and MS Office 2016; and
   (b) Notepad ++ or Notepad and a web browser (e.g. Internet Explorer or Microsoft Edge, etc.) for the development of web pages. NOTE: No internet access is required or allowed during the practical computer examination.

8. The November 2024 CAT examination will provide the learner data folder as a password-protected executable file. Once learners have successfully extracted the data files, the learners will then have access to all the data files in the data folder.
   (a) Learners will be required to extract the data folder using the password provided in the question paper as part of the instructions.
   (b) The process of extracting the data files should take place after learners are seated and <u>before the start of reading time.</u>
   (c) Learners need to open at least one of the files to view the file content and then close the file without any modifications. (Invigilators must be vigilant during this process.)
   (d) After a learner has verified and is satisfied that the data was successfully extracted, the learner must close the question paper and wait for the reading time to commence.
   (e) **Should a learner be unsuccessful in extracting the data, the CAT/IT educator/technician must assist the learner with the extraction.**
   (f) Ensure that learners rename the data folder with their examination number.

9. The November 2024 IT examinations provide learner files which are compulsory to use by candidates when they do their practical examination. The learner files were prepared and are to be used by candidates with the following software packages:
   (a) Delphi 2010 (OR a later version of Delphi that is compatible with Delphi 2010); and
   (b) MS Access 2010 and upwards.

10. The WCED will ensure that all schools offering CAT and IT are audited a month prior to the examinations. The DBE checklist for this process **(Annexure A: Certification)** is attached.

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11. At least two weeks prior to the practical examination, the CAT/IT educator must refer to **Annexure A: Certification** and ensure that:

(a) the regional settings are set to South Africa;

(b) the date and time settings, number settings and currency settings are set (referencing to Annexure A, no. 16), as follows:

Short date:	yyyy/MM/dd
Long date:	dddd, dd MMMM yyyy
Short time:	e.g. 10:01 AM
Long time:	e.g. 10:01:11 AM
First day of week:	Sunday
Number of digits after decimal:	two
List separator:	, (comma)
Measurement system:	Metric
Currency symbol:	R
Decimal symbol:	. (full stop)

(c) the language is set to English (South Africa), the paper size is set to A4 portrait, the unit of measurement is set to centimetres and the developer tab is activated in the word processing application;

(d) the *Autosave* option is set to five-minute intervals;

(e) no communication can take place between candidates on the network/computers;

(f) all previous files/folders/documents are removed or isolated;

(g) the web browser can display images;

(h) the required software for IT (Delphi 2010) is properly installed and tested; and

(i) the required software for CAT is properly installed and tested. [MS Office 2021 (also known as MS Office 365), or MS Office 2019 and MS Office 2016, Notepad ++ or Notepad and a web browser].

12. The completed **Annexure A: Certification** must be duly signed and submitted to the Directorate: Examinations Administration with the completed **Annexure B** (see paragraph 18.10), together with the answer scripts/data files of candidates on the day of the examination.

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13. A maximum of two examination sessions are allowed on the day of the examination for CAT Paper (P)1. The following timeframes are suggested for the sessions respectively:

(a) **ONE SESSION: CAT P1**

DESCRIPTION	DURATION	TIME
Seated in computer laboratory		08:30–08:35
Handing out access cards, log-on process and the renaming of examination folder. Reading of instructions and checking of papers and folders/files as per point 8	15 minutes	08:35–08:50
Reading time (see point 15)	10 minutes	08:50–09:00
Paper 1 (Practical)	Three hours	09:00–12:00
Finalise checking, retrieve folders, save to CDs/DVDs	120 minutes (depending on the number of candidates)	12:00–14:00

(b) **TWO SESSIONS: CAT P1**

DESCRIPTION	DURATION	TIME: FIRST SESSION	TIME: SECOND SESSION
Seated in computer laboratory		07:30–07:35	13:00–13:05
Handing out access cards, log-on process and the renaming of examination folder. Reading of instructions and checking of papers and folders/files as per point 8	15 minutes	07:35–07:50	13:05–13:20
Reading time (see point 15)	10 minutes	07:50–08:00	13:20–13:30
Paper 1 (Practical)	Three hours	08:00–11:00	13:30–16:30
Finalise checking, retrieve folders, save to CDs/DVDs	120 minutes (will depend on the number of candidates)	11:00–13:00	16:30–18:30

14. The following timeframes are suggested for IT P1:

DESCRIPTION	DURATION	TIME
Seated in computer laboratory		13:30–13:35
Handing out access cards, log-on process and the renaming of examination folder. Reading of instructions and checking of papers and folders/files as per point 8	15 minutes	13:35–13:50
Reading time (see point 15)	10 minutes	13:50–14:00
Paper 1 (Practical)	Three hours	14:00–17:00
Finalise checking, retrieve folders, save to CDs/DVDs	120 minutes (depending on the number of candidates)	17:00–18:00

15. Where there are two sessions, candidates and their parents **must** be informed in writing of the arrangements. Candidates for the second session must report an hour before the end of the first session (at 10:00). Should a candidate who is writing the second session, arrive after 10:00, it will be seen as late, and the candidate will not be allowed to write the examination. Please note that question papers may not be released to educators before 13:00.

16. Candidates **may not** leave the examination venue until all administrative processes regarding the conduct of the practical examination have been completed. In the case of candidates writing the first session, they are not allowed to leave the examination venue before 10:00.

17. On the day of the examination, the chief invigilator must ensure that the general instructions contained in the CAT P1 and IT P1 question papers are read out to the candidates **before** giving the candidates their own 10 minutes of reading time.

18. Schools are reminded of the following general roles and responsibilities of the chief invigilators, educators and candidates:

18.1 Before the commencement of the practical examination, the chief invigilator must ensure that all candidates:
   (a) are issued with their access cards and randomly placed at computers upon entering the examination room;
   (b) are taken through the log-on process and the renaming of their examination folder;
   (c) write their examination numbers on the access cards and the invigilator staples the completed access card to the back of the candidate's information sheet; and
   (d) are reminded to save their work frequently and correctly.

18.2 During the practical examination, the chief invigilator must ensure that:
  (a) in addition to the invigilator, an experienced CAT/IT educator is present during all practical sessions, so that he/she can provide assistance when necessary;
  (b) all invigilation requirements are strictly adhered to;
  (c) all security processes are carried out under the supervision of the chief invigilator; and
  (d) the correct procedures are followed in the case of a power failure.

18.3 After the practical examination, the chief invigilator must ensure that:
  (a) candidates check whether all their files are saved in their examination folders and labelled with their correct examination numbers;
  (b) candidates complete the information sheet and ensure that the information matches their examination folders;
  (c) the CAT/IT educator retrieves all candidate folders via the network or uses a flash drive to copy all the candidate folders onto one central computer or server, and checks that each candidate's file in their folder corresponds with the information on their information sheet; and
  (d) the educator saves all candidate folders to CDs/DVDs to be submitted for marking while creating two back-up CDs/DVDs at the same time, one of which must be safely stored at the examination centre and the other submitted to the examination section.

18.4 The CAT/IT educator must check that all candidate folders, labelled with each candidate's examination number, have been saved onto the CDs/DVDs and that the files and folders can all open, before the CDs/DVDs are packed and handed over to the chief invigilator.

18.5 Should candidates' folders or files be missing, the CAT/IT educator must try to recover the missing or damaged folders or files before creating the CDs/DVDs together with the IT technician or Centre for eInnovation (CEI) support staff.

18.6 The number of candidate folders saved to CDs/DVDs must correlate with the number of candidates listed on the mark sheet.

18.7 IT candidates who are printing their code must check that the codes of all units have been printed and then place their printouts in the correct order before handing these to the invigilator.

18.8 Candidates' files **may not** be saved permanently on flash disks as the potential of having entire files deleted due to viruses or unreliability is greater with flash disks.

18.9 A full report on any technical problems or irregularities that may have occurred during the examination must be recorded on the *Session Incident Report* form (including the starting and ending times of each session) and be submitted to the Directorate: Examinations Administration.

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18.10 The CAT/IT educator, together with the invigilators, must complete and sign **Annexure B: Computer Applications Technology and Information Technology 2024 Checklist** and submit it to the Directorate: Examinations Administration together with the answer scripts on the day of the examination. Also include the following:
(a)   Script Control Register/Attendance register
(b)   Departmental mark sheets
(c)   Seating plans
(d)   Incident report (if any)
(e)   Irregularity report (if any)
(f)   Completed checklist (Annexure A)
(g)   Completed checklist (Annexure B)
(h)   The CD/DVD: in protected casing and bubble-wrapped envelope
(i)   Candidates' Information Sheets (CAT)
(j)   Access cards stapled to back of information sheets

19.   In the event of a power failure during the examination, the following procedure must be followed:

19.1   The WCED must be informed of the power failure immediately.

19.2   The centre manager must inform the local authorities immediately and ascertain from them, if possible, how long the power failure is likely to last.

19.3   For a <u>scheduled</u> power outage after the examination has already started, such as loadshedding, candidates must remain in their seats in the computer room until the power supply is restored. Candidates may not communicate with one another while waiting for the power supply to be restored. The time lost during the power failure must be allowed as additional examination time.

19.4   For an <u>unscheduled</u> power outage, if, after two hours, the power supply has not been restored, the examination must be rescheduled in consultation with the WCED's Directorate: Examinations Administration.

19.5   In cases where two examination sessions are scheduled during an examination, namely in the morning and afternoon, the above procedure applies to the session during which the power failure occurs.

20.   In the event of computer breakdowns during the examination, the following procedure must be followed:

20.1   Candidates must be moved to back-up equipment immediately and appropriate additional time must be provided to the candidates.

20.2   No additional time will be allowed for work lost that was not correctly saved.

20.3   The nature of the computer breakdown as well as the action taken as intervention must be reported as an incident.

21.   Queries during the practical examination can be directed as follows:
        (numbers only available during the practical examinations)
21.1   IT related challenges: Schools IT Service Desk at 021 903 0267
21.2   **IT HOTLINE — available only on 22 and 23 October 2024 at 021 835 2798**
21.3   Registration related challenges: 021 467 2915 or 021 467 2943
21.4   Assessment related challenges: 021 467 2572
21.5   Question paper challenges: 021 467 2265
21.6   Curriculum related challenges: 021 467 2409 OR Ian.Carstens@westerncape.gov.za

22.   Kindly ensure that a copy of this minute is provided to all CAT and IT educators and invigilators.

SIGNED: BJ LORISTON
DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT
DATE: 2024-10-10

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