

2015 examination session stationery

Your questions answered

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Important procedures

The IB is fully committed to the onscreen marking of examination scripts by examiners, a process known as e-marking. Since the May 2013 examination session virtually all scripts have been marked in this way. Consequently, schools are sending scripts to a scanning centre and not directly to examiners. There are a few exceptions, so it is still essential to check IBIS for the address to which scripts for each subject must be sent (**Subject** tab > **Subject examiner** > **View examiners**).

E-marking offers many improvements to the efficiency of an examination session and the reliability of marking. However, it does require changes to many of our ways of working, a number of which directly affect Diploma Programme coordinators and the conduct of the examinations. The information here is intended to highlight the changes from a coordinator's perspective, but it is still essential to read the booklet *Conduct of IB Diploma Programme examinations 2015* (available in the library section of IBIS, under **Required during examinations**). Throughout this document the term "script" is used. Depending on the examination, a script may comprise:

- the (blue) answer cover sheet personalized with a candidate's details
- a structured (or write-on) examination paper (that is, the type of examination paper in which a candidate writes some or all of his/her answers)
- one or more 4 page answer booklets
- one or more sheets of squared paper
- one or more sheets of graph paper

To accommodate the scanning of scripts so that clear images can be created and sent to examiners for marking, it is essential that candidates/coordinators observe the following:

Candidates

- Candidates must write their answers using black or blue ink and draw graphs using a pencil with a soft lead. Colour can only be used in geography examinations.
- If a candidate wishes to write a plan for an answer or work-out the answer to a question (perhaps in mathematics), this plan or working-out must be shown in their answer booklet and not on separate scratch/rough paper or a separate answer booklet.
- Graph paper must only be used for drawing graphs, and should not be used as answer paper for text responses. Candidates must write their name and session number on each sheet of graph paper used.
- The instructions for completing the coversheet, and the way in which questions numbers should be written in the answer booklets must be observed.
- When joining together the items that comprise a script, the following sequence must be observed:
 1. The (blue) answer cover sheet.
 2. The structured/write-on examination paper, if appropriate to the examination.
 3. Answer booklets (or squared paper) in the order in which they were used.

4. Graph paper, if appropriate.

These items must be secured together using the string tag provided by the IB.

Coordinators

- When placing candidates' scripts inside a blue script envelope, where possible, please include **at least** twenty scripts in an envelope. Only include candidates' scripts in the envelope and no other items (such as correspondence, blank answer booklets/squared paper/graph paper, seating plans, attendance lists, or spare examination papers).
- Place the scripts in the script envelope so that the top answer cover sheet (and therefore any QR code) is visible through the window on the front of the envelope.
- Only scripts must be sent to a scanning centre. For the paper 1 multiple choice (MCQ) examinations in group 4 the MCQ answer sheets must be placed in the yellow MCQ envelope provided by the IB and sent to the IB Assessment Centre, Cardiff, UK (the address is on the envelope).

Thank you for ensuring these requirements are observed; it will greatly facilitate the processing of candidates' scripts.

Examination stationery

What is the Answer Booklet Guide for?

As the title suggests, it is a guide for candidates on how to use the answer booklets. Please use this with candidates before the examinations begin; it is not intended that candidates use the guide during an actual examination. You may wish to organize a session with candidates for the purpose of familiarizing them with the booklets and how to complete their question numbers.

Can the stationery received from the IB be used for familiarization purposes before the examinations?

Certainly use them as a visual aid, but remember that both examination papers and the stationery must be kept secure. Candidates must not be allowed to have copies of, or access to, the answer booklets or graph paper for security reasons. It is acceptable, under supervised conditions, to temporarily provide each candidate with an answer booklet for familiarization purposes. However, all booklets must be handed back to the coordinator and not kept. They must not be written on; otherwise there may be insufficient booklets for the examinations.

Can the examination stationery be used or photocopied for the school's mock/trial examinations?

No, it has never been permissible for schools to use (or reproduce) IB examination stationery for this purpose. This is for two reasons; it would of course exhaust the stationery supplies required for the actual examinations and it could allow for the possibility of candidates surreptitiously taking answer booklets containing notes into a future live examination.

Can the examination stationery be used for other IB assessments, such as language written tasks or written assignments?

No. Please only use the stationery for the written examinations in May and November. They have not been designed for use with other forms of assessment and schools have been sent the estimated quantity required for the examinations only.

Why do candidates have to write question numbers in a particular way?

Question numbers must be written following the patterns shown in the *Answer Booklet Guide*. The patterns for the numbers are based on an LCD display and can be electronically read by a process known as “intelligent character recognition”, or ICR. Following the correct numbering pattern will ensure efficient processing of scripts.

Why do candidates no longer have to write their session number on the front page of the stationery in the same style as the question numbers?

When the new examination stationery was first introduced it was the intention to scan and read (through intelligent character recognition) each session number on the front of answer booklets/graph paper/squared paper. However, this procedure has not been adopted so candidates can write their session number using their usual handwriting. If a candidate makes a mistake when writing their number, simply ask them to cross out the incorrect number and write it again.

Why do candidates have to write their name on the front page of each item of stationery they use?

This is simply because candidates sometimes write their session number incorrectly. If an item of examination stationery becomes detached from the cover sheet, the IB will be able to identify which candidate it belongs to.

Can the stationery I have left from the 2014 examination sessions be used, even though the design has changed slightly?

Yes, this will not pose any difficulties when the booklets are scanned.

What if I run out of stationery during the examination period?

The quantity of answer booklets/squared paper/graph paper supplied has been carefully calculated based on average usage for each subject component. A further percentage has then been applied, likely leading to a surplus. It is recommended that schools monitor the use of booklets while the examination session is underway. If a shortfall appears likely, please contact IB Answers (ibid@ibo.org), who will notify the appropriate department to despatch the additional material (within 24 hours).

How many answer booklets do I issue to candidates for each examination?

Recommendations for each examination have been published in the document *Conduct of IB Diploma Programme examinations 2015* (available in the library section of IBIS, under **Required during examinations**). However, these are guidelines only so coordinators should also use their own judgment.

Does the IB realise that using booklets is likely to waste paper and result in higher postage costs for schools?

It is possible that there will be some paper wastage. Feedback from schools on the use of answer booklets is encouraged to help improve our way of working and hopefully find ways of reducing waste. The unused pages of an answer booklet will add to the volume and weight of a package, but this may be offset by the efficiencies of sending virtually all scripts to the same location (note that a distinction is made between an “envelope” that will contain scripts for one subject/level/paper/response language and a “package” that may contain more than one envelope).

Rather than despatch answer booklets with blank pages and therefore increase the volume and weight of an envelope/package, can I tear out the unused pages of an answer booklet?

No, please do not do this. Although this would reduce the volume and weight, it would cause serious problems when the scripts are processed at the scanning centre. Consequently, there would be delays in the marking because it would be assumed that some of the candidate’s work was missing.

Is it acceptable for candidates to take their answer booklets apart?

No, please advise candidates not to damage the booklets in any way; this may harm the processing of the script.

Do candidates attach their answer cover sheet to their examination script as they did previously with the single sheets of answer paper?

Yes, as before candidates must attach the cover sheet using a string tag. Please do not send the cover sheets separately from the answer booklets; they must be attached to candidates’ scripts.

If a candidate is responding to an examination paper in a language that requires them to write from right to left, which booklet do they use and how should the answer cover sheet be attached?

Booklets with the margin on the right side have been provided for such languages (for example, Arabic, Hebrew, Urdu).

Squared paper

Schools with Japanese and/or Chinese subject registrations in groups 1 and/or 2 will receive an allocation of squared paper. These are two sided answer sheets, rather than booklets. However, their use should follow

the same guidelines as answer booklets. Please note, use of squared paper is not compulsory; schools can use answer booklets if they prefer, although using non-IB squared paper in examinations is not permitted.

If a candidate only needs to write a few words to finish an examination but has come to the end of a booklet, can I just give him/her ordinary lined paper rather than waste a whole booklet?

No, please do not do this. Provide the candidate with an answer booklet. Using any other paper would cause difficulties with scanning and processing scripts.

Now that virtually all scripts are being sent to the same location, can I send scripts from more than one examination in the same package?

It has long been practice to advise coordinators that scripts from different examinations should not be combined into one package, even though the package is being sent by courier. It would be preferable to continue this practice, even though virtually all scripts will be sent to the same scanning centre. However, this is obviously not practical or economic from a school's perspective. As a compromise it is suggested that scripts for different components of the same subject/level are not combined in the same package in case the package is lost in transit. For example, History paper 1 and paper 2 are normally scheduled for the same morning or afternoon. It would be prudent to separate the scripts for these papers when they are despatched. Whether scripts are combined into one package is left to the discretion of coordinators. (Note that a distinction is made between an "envelope" that will contain scripts for one subject/level/paper/response language and a "package" that may contain more than one envelope.)

Are schools still encouraged to send scripts by courier rather than the regular postal system?

Yes, using courier or some other traceable and efficient means of despatch is preferable to ensure the safe and prompt arrival of scripts.

Envelopes

Why does the IB provide two kinds of envelopes? Does it matter which one I use?

One envelope (blue) is for sending the candidates' examination scripts to the scanning centre (in a few cases direct to an examiner). The second envelope (yellow) is for sending multiple choice (MCQ) answer sheets to the IB Assessment Centre in Cardiff, UK.

Can I send the multiple choice (MCQ) answer sheets to a scanning centre instead of the IB Assessment Centre in Cardiff to save money?

No, please send the MCQ answer sheets to the IB Assessment Centre, Cardiff. If MCQ answer sheets are sent to a scanning centre the IB will incur additional costs to correct the mistake and the issue of results for your candidates may be delayed.

Why is it necessary to place at least twenty scripts in the script envelope (assuming there are at least twenty candidates for the examination)?

The process of scanning is based on twenty or more scripts per envelope. If less than twenty scripts are in an envelope there will be additional cost for the IB, but more importantly having very few scripts in a packet slows down the processing of scripts, which ultimately affects the time available to mark and process data prior to the issue of results.

Is it acceptable to mix together scripts from different examinations in the same script envelope to ensure there are twenty or more scripts? For example, if I only have eleven candidates for geography HL paper 1, should I place the geography HL paper 2 scripts in the envelope as well to make more than twenty?

No, this will adversely affect the processing of scripts at the scanning centre. The top answer cover sheet will be scanned through one of the windows in the script envelope. This will inform the scanning centre which scripts are enclosed in the envelope, but if scripts from different examinations lie behind the first answer cover sheet, the information will be wrong.

Why is it necessary to write on the back of the script envelope how many scripts are enclosed in the envelope?

This helps facilitate the processing of scripts, consequently ensuring timely marking.

Can the 'script' envelopes be used for mailing other assessment material (apart from the examination scripts)?

The envelopes are now designed purely for examination scripts; schools should use their own envelopes when mailing extended essays/internal assessment etc.

Who do I contact in the IB if I have a problem or question?

Please always contact IB Answers (ibid@ibo.org) and not your IB Global Centre or a member of IB staff directly. This will ensure consistent and accurate answers to questions.