

Contents

Purpose of exam	1
Testing competence	1
Editing experience	1
A word of warning	1
Exam content and structure	1
Marks required to pass.....	2
LANGUAGE part (L).....	2
MANUSCRIPT part (M)	2
Mark allocation and how to complete M part	2
KNOWLEDGE part (K)	3
Marking and how to approach K part.....	3
Sample exams	4
Registration	4
Acknowledgement, receipt, photo ID, candidate number	4
Special needs.....	4
Remote candidacy.....	4
Editing on screen	5
Hardware systems.....	5
Windows computers at Cliftons venues	5
Apple computers at Cliftons venues	5
Remote candidates	5
Software systems	5
Microsoft Word	5
Adobe Acrobat Reader	6
Web browser and internet.....	6
Familiarity with Word and PDF skills.....	6
Mark-up symbols	6
Hard copy	6



Exam day	7
COVIDSafe requirements	7
Entry to Cliftons venue	7
IPEd COVIDSafe requirements	7
Noncompliance with COVIDSafe requirements	7
Invigilators	8
Critical times	8
Exam timing	8
Time of arrival at the exam venue	9
Late arrival	9
What to bring	9
Reference books	9
Bound notes	10
Permitted bindings	10
Checks for handwriting	10
During the exam	10
Phone, smartwatches, fitbits and other electronic devices	10
Ordinary watches	11
Toilet breaks	11
Interruptions	11
Illness	11
Food and drinks	11
Early finish	11
At end of exam	11
Marking	12
Results	12
Appeals	12
Against conduct of exam, or special consideration	12
Against results	12
Tips from AEs who have passed the exam	13
Version	14

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.

Exam 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 (PDF form)

The KNOWLEDGE part (PDF form)

The MANUSCRIPT part (Word files), comprising an extract (M-E) and a style sheet (M-S).

To become familiar with how to work in the exam documents, make sure you:

- attempt the sample exams
- watch the demonstration video (webinar recording), which shows what to expect for each part
- read the document *How to use the 2020 exam documents*, which provides detailed instructions.

Approved remote candidates will also receive detailed step-by-step instructions on the extra systems and software set-up they will need to do.



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Marks required to pass

The exam is pass/fail. The pass mark is a score of 80% overall, and a minimum of 65% in each of the three parts.

Marking is absolute, not relative (that is, there is no bell curve). If all candidates score at least the minimum pass marks, then all candidates will pass. However, the parts have different weights, as set out below.

LANGUAGE part (L)

L part is worth 20% of the total marks for the exam. You must answer 20 of 24 questions (each question is worth 1 mark), but you may choose to answer up to 24 questions to give yourself a safety margin if you wish. However, even if you answer all 24 questions, you can only score a maximum of 20/20.

20% of the total exam equates to a writing time of approximately 30 minutes for this section, including time to review answers, but you should decide for yourself how to allocate your time in the exam.

MANUSCRIPT part (M)

M part is worth 40% of the total marks for the exam. You must edit the extract (M-E) in accordance with the brief provided, write queries for the author and prepare a style sheet (M-S).

40% equates to a writing time of approximately 75 minutes. We suggest spending 1 hour on completing this part and the other 15 minutes to review your work, but you should decide for yourself how to allocate your time in the exam. If you're running over time on the M part, and still have questions in the other parts to complete, you should move on to the other sections and go back to M part if you have time left.

Mark allocation and how to complete M part

M part provides a maximum of 200 raw marks, allocated as follows:

- 160 marks for copyediting the extract
- 20 marks for writing 10 author queries
- 20 marks for creating the style sheet.

Note that in the extract (M-E) there are more than 160 marks to attain, so you will not need to pick up every single possible edit.

Your total out of 200 is divided by 5 to produce a mark out of 40. You need to achieve sufficient marks to attain the required minimum of 65% for the part, but of course you should aim to achieve as many marks as possible within the time. Some things will just need correcting (e.g. typos) but other edits will be issues of style. When you make a style decision, include it clearly on your style sheet.

In the extract, you will:

- receive a mark for every correct edit that you make, including the correct application of your own style sheet (even if it does not involve making a correction)
- lose a mark for any edit that creates an error or that does not follow the style decision you made and entered in your style sheet.

You will not lose a mark where a change can be considered both right and wrong (e.g. some commas) – the markers are editors too and will not needlessly and aggressively mark you down.

For the author queries, you will only be awarded marks for 10 queries. You won't be penalised for raising more than 10, but you should focus on quality, not quantity. The danger with raising too many queries is that it takes up valuable time and, more importantly, introduces the risk of not making enough editing decisions. The advice from markers is that, in previous years, people have done less well in M part than they should have because they didn't take responsibility for correcting things they should have corrected, and listed queries that they ought to have been able to resolve by using their judgement and listing their decisions on their style sheet.

For the style sheet (M-S), remember to fill out both parts. The first part is where you record the *general* style decisions that apply to your edit; the second part is where you alphabetically enter your style decisions relating to individual words and phrases (spelling, capitalisation, etc.). Be sure to conform to your own style sheet as you do the edit.

KNOWLEDGE part (K)

K part is worth 40%. There are 10 questions; you must complete **4** of these. The emphasis in K part is on an understanding of the principles, practices and conventions of the editing profession, as much as on the application of particular editing skills.

40% in this part equates to 75 minutes of writing time. We suggest you spend 15 minutes on each of the four questions you choose (total 1 hour), plus 15 minutes to review your work. You should decide for yourself how to allocate your time in the exam.

Marking and how to approach K part

Each question is worth 20 raw marks, giving a total of 80 marks, which is divided by 2 to arrive at a mark out of 40.

Use your time in this section wisely. Allow enough time to **do exactly 4 questions**. Don't spend more time than is allotted doing a question and leave too little time to finish the others. Remember, you need to achieve a minimum of 65% in each part, so if you don't do well on one of the questions in this part, there is room to make up marks on the other 3 that you attempt. But if you only attempt to answer 3 questions, the maximum mark you can achieve is 60/80 or 75% – this is below the 80% overall pass mark and too close to the minimum 65% needed for the part. Also answering more than 4 questions will not gain you extra marks – the markers will not transfer your marks from one question to another – and will waste valuable time.

K part is a fillable PDF form (see 'Editing on screen' below), in which many of the questions require you to type into a text box. Other questions are multiple-choice or true–false. The size of a box provides a guide to the expected length of the answer. If you don't have room, you can type more in the extra boxes at the end of the document ('Answers continued' pages). But if you find you are filling in these extra boxes, you are probably spending too long on a particular question.

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 candidate 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 4 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 branch's Accreditation Board delegate to find the best solution.

Remote candidacy

The deadline for requesting remote candidacy closed on 4 October 2020. Registered candidates whose location or personal circumstances have changed, such that sitting the exam at one of the venues is now prohibitively difficult, can make a late request to sit the exam remotely by emailing the Accreditation Board chair: ab.chair@iped-editors.org. You are expected to provide evidence of your circumstances, such as a medical

certificate. The Accreditation Board cannot guarantee that late requests for remote candidacy can be accommodated. If your remote request cannot be accommodated, your registration fee will be refunded.

Editing on screen

Hardware systems

Windows computers at Cliftons venues

The exam facilities provide Windows PCs for candidates to use in the exam configured with:

- Windows 10 operating system
- 25-inch monitor.

Cliftons provide onsite technical support and invigilators will be equipped with basic troubleshooting instructions.

You will sit the exam on a Windows system unless you specifically request a Mac when you register for the exam.

Apple computers at Cliftons venues

Cliftons hire Apple computers, at extra cost per hire to IPEd. These will be iMacs configured with:

- OSX Mojave
- 27-inch monitors.

Cliftons do not provide technical support for iMacs, but invigilators will be equipped with basic troubleshooting instructions.

You will only be able to sit the exam on an iMac if you specifically requested one during registration, and this was confirmed. An iMac cannot be supplied on the day if you haven't requested one in advance.

Remote candidates

Approved remote candidates will sit the exam on their own systems, which may be either Windows or Apple systems. IPEd cannot provide technical support and takes no responsibility for systems failures for remote candidates.

Software systems

Microsoft Word

The M part exam documents must be completed in Microsoft Word. At Cliftons venues this will be Word 2016 on both Windows and iMac computers, pre-configured with exam settings. Approved remote candidates may use any version of Word later than Word 2013 and will have to follow instructions to do the exam configuration themselves.

Adobe Acrobat Reader

The PDF exam documents (K, L and Instructions) must be read in Adobe Acrobat Reader (not Acrobat Pro and not an alternative PDF reader app). In Cliftons venues, Reader will be installed as the default PDF app. Approved remote candidates will have to install Reader and set it as the default PDF app themselves.

Web browser and internet

The only internet access permitted is to the *Macquarie Dictionary Online*. Candidates at Cliftons venues will have the dictionary open and logged in for them on the computer's default web browser. Remote candidates will be provided with temporary login credentials at the start of their exam and may use any web browser on their system.

Familiarity with Word and PDF skills

The exam requires basic computer literacy and some ability to use Microsoft Word and PDF files (keeping up with technology being a standard required of a competent editor). However, the exam does not test your skill or knowledge of advanced features of Word or Acrobat.

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

Mark-up symbols

You will not be asked to mark up the exam files using paper mark-up symbols or using PDF mark-up tools. The only mark-up you will do is using Track Changes in Word in the MANUSCRIPT part.

However, paper mark-up symbols *are* covered by A6.6 in the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*, and the exam is tests against the Standards, so it's possible for a question about them to be included in the KNOWLEDGE part of the exam. It is recommended you have a basic familiarity with paper mark-up symbols – at least to be able to recognise what the main symbols mean, and to know how to quickly look them up in your favourite hard-copy resource if necessary.

Hard copy

There will be no hard copy of instructions or exam documents – everything is on screen. The only hard copy materials you will have are the references and bound notes that you bring in yourself. Some venues may provide scribble paper. However, there are limited opportunities for writing anything more than the most minimal notes during the exam. Anything written down during the exam will be checked by invigilators and must be left behind or destroyed before you leave the exam.

Exam day

COVIDSafe requirements

Each Cliftons venue will be following its COVIDSafe Plan in accordance with local health guidelines. IPEd also has its own COVIDSafe Plan that it requires candidates and invigilators to follow.

Please note that local health rules are subject to change and will override Cliftons or IPEd information provided here.

Entry to Cliftons venue

Before you are allowed to enter the exam venue, you are required to:

- sign in for contact tracing – this can be done online in advance (lead invigilators will provide the link in the week before the exam)
- have an onsite temperature test.

Anyone who has an elevated temperature will be refused entry by the venue. If this happens to you, you will need to contact the Lead Invigilator immediately, who will make a record of the matter. Your registration fee will be refunded, less an administration fee.

IPEd COVIDSafe requirements

Unless your local health authority has *stricter* requirements, all candidates and invigilators must:

- wear a mask on arrival at the venue
- inside the venue, keep the mask on when near or interacting with other people – you may remove your mask to eat, drink or take medication, and when seated alone
- maintain a physical distance of 1.5m from other people.

We also recommend:

- avoiding public transport, if possible, when travelling to and from the venue
- wearing a mask whenever physical distancing is not possible
- going straight to and from the exam, without unnecessary stops or socialising
- bringing your own hand sanitiser and wipes to clean your workstation, especially the computer keyboard and mouse (this will have been done but you should take your own precautions).

If you have any flu-like symptoms on the day of the exam or know you have been in recent contact with an infected person, do *not* attend the venue. Instead, contact the Lead Invigilator, who will make a record of the matter. The exam coordinator will contact you about what happens next.

Noncompliance with COVIDSafe requirements

Anyone barred entry to the venue because they refuse or fail to sign in or have their temperature taken will be treated as a 'no show' – no refund is allowed. Anyone refusing

to comply with the venue's or IPEd's COVIDSafe requirements regarding distancing and masks may be asked to leave the exam.

Invigilators

There will be at least two invigilators at each exam venue, and one invigilator for each approved remote candidate.

During the exam, invigilators 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 approximately **4 hours**, including preparation and reading time, as follows:

- 30 minutes to read the 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.

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.

Approved remote candidates will have extra set-up and post-exam procedures to complete, so will also need to allow about 5 hours in total.

Exam timing

On the day, the timing will run as follows.

- 12.00–12.50pm: Candidates will be processed by invigilation team (notes and reference books checked, candidate numbers and photo ID etc. cross-checked). Once processed, you'll be able to enter the exam room to find a spot and check the equipment (but you won't be allowed to open up any of the exam documents).
- 12.50–1.00pm: The invigilators will usher everyone into the exam room.
- 1.00–1.05pm: The invigilators will brief candidates on how the exam will be run and will explain what to do if you need to go to the toilet or if there is an emergency.
- 1.05–1.30pm: Candidates will read the exam instructions on screen, rename their exam documents, open each document and type their candidate number into the box in each, and check that they are logged into the *Macquarie Dictionary Online*. (The invigilator will lead candidates through this process.)
- 1.30–2.00pm: Reading time (exam papers).
- 2.00–5.00pm: Working time.

Time of arrival at the exam venue

Candidates should plan to arrive with enough time to allow for queueing to enter the venue, having their temperature taken and, once inside, registering with the invigilators to have their resources and photo ID checked.

- In venues that are likely to have 15+ candidates (Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney and Perth), we suggest you aim to arrive at least 45 minutes before the exam room opens (i.e. arrive around 12 noon).
- In venues that have fewer candidates (Adelaide and Wellington), we suggest you plan to arrive at least 20 minutes before the exam room opens (i.e. no later than 12.30pm).

It is better to be early than in a rush.

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)
- a stand-alone calculator (optional)
- water and snacks (refreshments may be limited at the venue)
- hand sanitiser
- a face mask.

Entry into the exam 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 it.)

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. For example, be clear whether you are using the print 6th edition of the *Style Manual* or the new online edition (printed out in your notes).

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 printed material, typed notes, photocopied handwritten notes and photocopies of reference book pages.

Neither loose sheets of paper nor handwritten notes are permitted (see 'Checks for handwriting' below). 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.

Checks for handwriting

The exam questions must remain confidential and not be disclosed outside the exam. The binding requirements are to prevent candidates copying down the exam questions on their scribble paper and slipping them into their bound notes when they leave.

The invigilators will check there is nothing handwritten in your bound notes before you enter the exam room and again when you leave.

During the exam

Phone, smartwatches, fitbits and other electronic devices

All electronic devices capable of transmission, including phones and watches, must be turned OFF (not silent) and placed under your chair.

Ordinary watches

Ordinary (non-transmitting) 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 (e.g. power outage), please listen to and obey instructions from invigilators.

Illness

If you need to leave the room for a reason other than a toilet break, you must speak with an invigilator, who will follow a procedure similar to that for toilet breaks. 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 placed on your workstation. The only fluid you may definitely bring into the exam room is water; some venues may also allow hot beverages. All fluids must be kept in a bottle or container that has a secure lid; the lid must be kept closed and the bottle 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 any scribble paper to the invigilator (and a copy of your in-house style guide, if you used one), 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 10–12 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 the IPEd 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 as many times as you like; however, the reduced fee for re-sitting only applies to one subsequent exam.

Appeals

Appeals must be 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, reviews 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 Accreditation 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 alphabetical 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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Version

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