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Purpose of exam

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

The 2026–27 exam is based on the 3rd edition of the IPEd standards, titled *IPEd standards for editing practice*.

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 been working as a professional editor for about 2 to 3 years full-time or 4 to 6 years part-time or casually. 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, including an artificial intelligence (AI) agent, during the exam will be permanently barred from accreditation.

Exam content, structure and marks

The exam content reflects the variety of work that editors do, with examples drawn from various kinds of publishing. The exam consists of 3 parts:

The Language part (1 PDF form)

The Manuscript part (2 Word files), comprising an extract and a style sheet

The Knowledge part (1 PDF form).

To become familiar with how to work in the exam documents:

- attempt the sample exams
- watch the recorded session called “How to use the accreditation exam documents” – fully registered candidates receive free access to this 2024 video recording – setup processes have changed but navigation and completion processes are largely the same
- read the detailed guidance in the *Technical session instructions* issued to registered candidates as soon as they complete the registration form, and in the *Language part instructions*, *Manuscript part instructions* and *Knowledge part instructions* documents issued before the practice sessions for each part of the exam.

Registered candidates also receive detailed step-by-step instructions on systems and software.

Marks required to pass

The exam is pass/fail. The pass mark is a score of 80% overall **as well as** a minimum of 65% in **each** of:

- the 3 parts (Language, Manuscript and Knowledge)
- the 3 components in the Manuscript part (extract copyedit, style sheet and author queries)
- the 2 compulsory questions in the Knowledge part.

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

The Language part of the exam consists of short-answer and multiple-choice questions on language skills needed for copyediting.

The Language part is worth 20% of the total marks for the exam. It consists of 20 questions: 16 sentences for copyediting and 4 multiple-choice questions on aspects of grammar. You must answer all 20 questions. Each question is worth 1 mark (1% of the exam).

You can earn part marks in some of the copyediting questions because there might be more than 1 error to correct in the sentence. A sentence might also have no errors. The multiple-choice questions are worth a full mark because the answer is either correct or not.

The Language part is a fillable PDF form (see “[Editing on-screen](#)” below). The copyediting questions require you to either type into a text box to correct the errors or click an “OK” box to indicate the sentence has no errors, and the multiple-choice questions require you to click a radio button.

You have 35 minutes to complete Language part: 5 minutes of reading time and 30 minutes of working time.

Manuscript part

The Manuscript part of the exam is a practical copyediting exercise. It comprises a short extract for editing and a style sheet, both in Microsoft Word format.

The Manuscript part is worth 40% of the total marks for the exam. It has 3 components:

- 1) copyediting a text extract of about 1,200 words in accordance with the brief provided, completed in the “M-extract” file (32%)
- 2) writing author queries that arise during the copyedit, also completed in the “M-extract” file (4%)
- 3) creating a style sheet for the extract, completed in the “M-style-sheet” file (4%).

You must obtain a minimum of 65% in each of these 3 components to pass this part of the exam.

You have 95 minutes to complete the Manuscript part: 20 minutes of reading time and 75 minutes of working time. We suggest spending 1 hour of working time on completing the part and the remaining 15 minutes on reviewing your work, but you should decide for yourself how to allocate your time in the exam.

Mark allocation for the part

The Manuscript 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.

Your total out of 200 is divided by 5 to produce a mark out of 40 for the part. You need to attain sufficient marks to reach the required minimum of 65% in each component, but of course you should aim to achieve as many marks as possible within the time and at least 80% to pass the exam as a whole.

Mark allocation for the extract editing component

The extract contains more than 160 attainable marks, so you do not need to pick up every single possible edit. Some things just need correcting (e.g. typos), but other edits are issues of style. When you make a style decision, include it clearly in your style sheet.

In the extract, you:

- 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 – that includes any edit that changes the meaning of the original text without a query or that does not follow the style decision you made and entered in your style sheet.

You do not lose a mark where a change can be considered both right and wrong (e.g. some commas) – the assessors are editors too and do not needlessly mark you down. You also do not lose a mark for failing to correct an error.

Your aim is not to achieve the perfect edit but to attain enough marks to pass the component and the exam overall:

- 80% (overall pass mark) = 128 marks
- 65% (component pass mark) = 104 marks.

Mark allocation for the author query component

You are awarded marks for only 10 queries, even if you raise more than that. You are not 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 assessors is that, in previous exams, people who performed less well in the Manuscript part did not take responsibility for querying things they should have, and queried things they ought to have been able to resolve easily (e.g. by checking a dictionary or, in matters of style, by using their judgement and listing their decisions in their style sheet).

Each query is worth 2 marks (1 for content, 1 for expression), up to a maximum of 20 marks. Your aim is to attain enough marks to pass the component and the exam overall:

- 80% (overall pass mark) = 16 marks
- 65% (component pass mark) = 13 marks.

Mark allocation for the style sheet component

For the style sheet, 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 enter your style decisions **alphabetically** relating to individual words and phrases (choice of variant spelling, capitalisation, etc.). Make sure you conform to your entries in the style sheet as you do the edit.

Each correct style sheet entry is worth 1 mark, up to a maximum of 40 marks, which is divided by 2 to give a total out of 20.

You do not lose marks for incorrect entries, but don't record unnecessary entries in your style sheet because this wastes valuable time.

Your aim is to attain enough marks to pass the component and the exam overall:

- 80% (overall pass mark) = 32 correct entries = 16 marks
- 65% (component pass mark) = 26 correct entries = 13 marks.

In other words, if you don't make at least 26 entries (all of which would need to be correct), you will not pass this component or the Manuscript part overall.

Knowledge part

The emphasis in the Knowledge part is on assessing your understanding of the principles, practices and conventions of the editing profession, as much as on the application of particular editing skills.

The Knowledge part is worth 40% of the total marks for the exam. There are 6 questions: 2 compulsory questions and 4 elective questions.

You must complete **4 questions in total**, comprising the **2 compulsory questions** and your choice of 2 out of the 4 elective questions.

The 2 compulsory questions are drawn from Part A of the IPed standards:

- Question 1 – Professional practice
- Question 2 – Ethical and legal matters.

The 4 elective questions are drawn from Parts B to E of the IPeD standards:

- Question 3 – Part B: Management and liaison
- Question 4 – Part C: Substance and structure
- Question 5 – Part D: Language and illustrations
- Question 6 – Part E: Completeness and consistency.

You have 95 minutes to complete the Knowledge part: 20 minutes of reading time and 75 minutes of working time. We suggest you spend 15 minutes of working time on each of the 2 compulsory questions and each of the 2 elective questions you choose (total 1 hour), plus 15 minutes to review your work. However, you should decide for yourself how to allocate your time in the exam.

Mark allocation and how to approach the Knowledge 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 for the part.

You must achieve at least 65% in each of the compulsory questions, as well as 65% for the part, to pass the part – remembering that you are also aiming for at least 80% to pass the exam overall.

Use your time in this part wisely. Don't spend more time than is allotted doing a question and leave too little time to finish the others. Allow enough time to **do exactly 4 questions**.

If you don't do well enough to pass 1 of the elective questions in this part, it is still possible to pass the part if you score very highly in the other 3 questions.

However, you should at least attempt 4 questions. 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, which means that you need to achieve well over 80% in either the Language part or the Manuscript part, or both. It also means that your answers to the 3 questions must be near perfect so that you don't drop below the minimum 65%. While it is theoretically possible to pass the part, and the exam, by answering only 1 of the elective questions, you will make it very hard on yourself and forgo the opportunity to pick up extra marks.

Answering more than 4 questions does not gain you extra marks – the assessors do not transfer your marks from one question to another – and wastes valuable time.

The Knowledge 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 is a guide to the expected length of the answer. If you run out of 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 sample parts under exam conditions), allowing 15–20 minutes for each.

Registration

Registration for the exam involves 3 steps:

- 1) Register for the IPed event named 2026–27 IPed accreditation exam.
- 2) Pay the registration fee for the Language part of the exam.
- 3) Complete the online registration form to provide information about yourself and your sitting choice (remote or alternative venue), computer system and other requirements.

You receive a link to the registration form once you have completed step 1. You separately receive a receipt once you have paid the fee. After all 3 steps are complete, you receive a formal acknowledgement of registration from the exam administrator.

Photo identification

You need to show photo identification to the exam coordinator at your individual technical session. You should also have this with you on each exam day for your invigilator to check, if necessary.

Candidate number and password

Once registrations close, about 4 weeks before the exam date for the Language part, the exam administrator gives you a confidential 5-digit candidate number, which appears instead of your name on the exam documents for each part. Only you and the exam administrator will be able to match this number with your name. This is to ensure that the assessors marking the exam documents 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 administrator.

At the same time, you also receive one half of a unique password used to open your exam documents. Your half of the password is linked to your candidate number and is the same for all 3 parts of the exam. Only you and the exam administrator can match this password with your candidate number.

You receive the other half of the password during each part of the exam (a different half for each part). Your invigilator in each part knows this half, but not the other half.

You enter both halves of the password to open your exam document. Only you and the exam coordinator know the full password for the exam document with your number on it. The exam coordinator changes the password for the assessors to access your completed exam document.

Adjustments and other requests

If you have any adjustments or other requests that need to be accommodated so that you are not disadvantaged when sitting the exam, you must make a formal request when you register for the exam.

If something arises after you have registered, you must contact the exam administrator (exam.administration@iped-editors.org) with details of your request as soon as you are aware that you need an adjustment or other arrangement.

Depending on the nature of your request, we might ask you to provide more information and proof of your circumstances, such as a medical certificate.

Timing of requests

Do not delay making a request or providing information or proof if required. We need to assess *and approve* your request before the registration closing date, to allow us sufficient time to implement the arrangements.

Examples of requests

Examples of adjustment requests include extra time, an Auslan interpreter (e.g. to understand invigilator instructions), opportunity to take medication during the exam (especially if it needs to be administered in another room), and dietary needs that require you to have food or drink at a particular time.

You do **not** need to make an adjustment request:

- to use non-connective earplugs (e.g. foam plugs or Loops) or headphones (but earplugs or headphones that have wireless or Bluetooth connectivity are not permitted)
- to use ergonomic or custom equipment (e.g. an ergonomic or custom keyboard, mouse, monitor, chair, lumbar support, monitor stand or footstool).

Sitting arrangements

The two sitting options for the 2026–27 exam are remote sitting and alternative venue sitting.

Remote sitting

Sitting the exam remotely in your own home, workplace or other suitable venue of your choice is the default option for the 2026–27 exam.

You must be able to set up a workstation in a private area, ideally with a door that closes, where you will not be interrupted or visible to passers-by for the duration of the exam.

You are responsible for providing your own software, hardware, internet connection, workstation equipment and refreshments.

In the exam registration form, you need to agree to:

- certain technology waivers because you are required to provide your own equipment and internet connection
- privacy waivers because you must allow the remote invigilator to see you, the room where you sit the exam and your computer screen while you complete the exam, and for your exam to be recorded.

Alternative venue sitting

Candidates who do not have good internet connection that can sustain video feed, or who are unable to find a venue conducive to sitting an exam, should request arrangement of an alternative venue with an in-person invigilator.

Please apply as early as possible for an alternative venue arrangement so that the Accreditation Board has enough time to find you an invigilator and arrange a venue at or near your location.

In the exam registration form, you need to agree to:

- certain technology waivers because you may be required to provide your own equipment and internet connection, and you will be responsible for your own technical support

- privacy waivers because you must allow the in-person invigilator to monitor you during the exam, and if the alternative venue is a private residence or workplace, to access the premises for both practice sessions and on exam days.

Important note

If we are unable to accommodate your remote or alternative venue sitting for any reason – for example, insufficient invigilators or no alternative venue can be found – your registration will be cancelled and your registration fee refunded, less any applicable cancellation fee.

Mandatory technical session

After you have completed the online registration form indicating your choice of remote or alternative venue and Windows or Apple computer, the exam coordinator will contact you to arrange an individual technical session on Microsoft Teams for each part of the exam.

This mandatory session is to:

- check that the physical space and technical setup for the workstation on which you will sit the exam meets the requirements set out in “Editing on-screen”
- conduct pre-exam checks to minimise the amount of time spent on checks and setup in Teams meetings in your practice sessions and on exam day
- ensure you are familiar with the technical systems and processes you will be using, so that all you have to worry about on exam day is answering the questions.

You must attend each part’s technical session on the computer you will use and at the venue where you will sit that part. The length of each session will depend on how well you have prepared for it and how much changes between parts. Expect to spend up to an hour in the session for the Language part, and around 10 minutes each for the Manuscript and Knowledge parts if very little has changed since your previous session.

The information in this guide provides an idea of the required setup, systems and checks. The exam coordinator will send you more detailed instructions on getting ready for your first technical session.

Following your technical session, you have the opportunity to join our invigilator training sessions to gain some extra practice in exam procedures. The more familiar you are with them, the less stressful each part will be on exam day.

Practice sessions and Teams meeting (remote candidates)

Once registrations close on 8 November 2026, we assign you to a Teams meeting with specific invigilators and other candidates in or near your time zone.

Around 3 weeks before each exam day, you receive:

- details about your Teams meeting and assigned invigilators, on the email you registered with
- an invitation to a Teams meeting for a practice session with your assigned Teams meeting group, on the email determined at your technical session
- an invitation to a Teams meeting for the exam, on the email confirmed at your practice session.

All invigilators and candidates must attend at least 1 practice session with their assigned Teams meeting group. The group can decide whether to hold additional practice sessions before the Language part of the exam on 7 December 2026.

Practice sessions and exam sitting arrangements (alternative venue candidates)

Around 3 weeks before each exam day, you receive details about your alternative venue sitting arrangements by email. This includes details for practice sessions and exam days.

You, your invigilator and any other candidates at the same alternative venue must attend at least 1 practice session together. You can then decide whether to hold additional practice sessions before the Language part of the exam on 7 December 2026.

Editing on-screen

In the registration form, you are asked to agree that you take responsibility for your own hardware and software.

Hardware systems and equipment

You need to sit the exam on a computer (desktop or laptop), not a tablet or other device. The monitor or screen must be large enough for you to manage several apps and documents.

The computer must be connected to the internet. For remote candidates, the internet connection must be reliable enough to sustain video and audio feed for the duration of the exam (up to 3 hours).

Remote candidates also need a web cam and microphone.

Any additional equipment you need (e.g. footstool, monitor stand, lumbar support) is also your responsibility.

Operating systems

When you register for the exam, you specify whether you plan to sit the exam on a Windows system or an Apple system. This is so we can allocate an invigilator who is familiar with your system. Invigilators are equipped with basic troubleshooting instructions for either Windows or Apple systems and a number to call for further assistance.

Windows users should use Windows 11. If you are using any other version of Windows, please advise the exam administrator before registrations close.

Apple users may use macOS Ventura (13), Sonoma (14), Sequoia (15) or Tahoe (26). If you are using an older version of macOS or the newer Golden Gate (27), please advise the exam coordinator at your technical session.

It is up to you to ensure that your operating system is up to date and that your exam session will not be interrupted by system updates.

Software systems

The technical session with the exam coordinator allows us to check that all your software is installed and configured correctly for each part of the exam. There will not be time in practice sessions or on exam days for new installations or changing configurations. Detailed guidance on installation and configuration for all software is contained in the *Technical session instructions* issued to registered candidates.

Microsoft Word

You must complete the Manuscript part of the exam using Microsoft Word. You may use any version of Word later than Word 2016, including Office 365.

You receive instructions on how to configure Word for the exam – including disabling some features in the latest versions of Word – before the technical session for the Manuscript part.

Adobe Acrobat

You must complete the Language and Knowledge parts of the exam using **Adobe Acrobat** (free version) and not an alternative PDF reader app.

You receive instructions on how to install and configure Acrobat for both parts of the exam before the technical session for the Language part.

Web browser and Teams app

You may use any web browser on your system.

If you are sitting remotely, you must install and use the desktop version of Microsoft Teams, rather than joining meetings via your browser, because you will be using your browser for other activities.

You do not need to have an account for Teams, but it's fine if you do. You practise using the Teams app correctly in your technical and practice sessions before the exam so you are familiar with joining meetings and sharing your entire desktop (not just a window or app).

Skills in using Word and Acrobat PDFs

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 about the skills required on the [Exam resources](#) page (under "Editing on-screen") on the IPed website.

The exam coordinator checks your Word setup and tools during your technical session for the Manuscript part.

To ensure fairness for all candidates, you must not use any AI, including Copilot, nor any other editing add-ons or tools such as Draftsmith, PerfectIt, EndNote or Word macros.

Before the Manuscript part of the exam, remove or deactivate editing tools, AI and add-ons. Practise editing without using these tools.

Mark-up symbols

The only mark-up you do in the exam is using Track Changes and Comments in Word in the Manuscript part. You are not asked to mark up the exam files using paper mark-up symbols or PDF mark-up tools.

However, editorial mark-up is covered by standards A1.1, A7.1 and A7.7 in the *IPed standards for editing practice* (3rd edition), so it's possible for a question *about* mark-up to be included in the Knowledge part of the exam. We recommend that you have a basic familiarity with either paper or digital mark-up symbols and processes – at least to be able to recognise what the main symbols mean – and that you know how to quickly look them up in your favourite resources if necessary.

Hard copy

There is no hard copy of instructions or exam documents – everything is on-screen. The only hard-copy materials you have in the exam are the references and notes you wish to use.

We recommend you have some scribble paper available for writing notes on during the exam reading or working time if you wish.

At the end of the exam, your invigilator will ask you to show them anything you have written down during the exam and then to destroy the materials while your invigilator watches. You should avoid writing on anything you don't wish to destroy.

Exam day

Invigilators

An invigilator guides you through the exam procedures, watches you throughout the exam and gives timing announcements at various points. We aim to provide 1 invigilator for every 2 candidates, but this will depend on the number of candidates and the number of available invigilators. All invigilators are Accredited Editors.

During the exam, invigilators can answer questions about the exam format and procedure but not about the exam content.

Exam timing

Each part of the exam has preparation time, set reading and working times, and time for post-exam procedures.

The time for preparation and post-exam procedures varies for each candidate, but allow at least 5 minutes and up to 30 minutes for each. Your technical and practice sessions will give you a good idea of how long these take for you.

The set reading and working times are set out in Table 1.

Table 1

Exam part	Reading time	Working time	Total
Language	5 minutes	30 minutes	35 minutes
Manuscript	20 minutes	75 minutes	95 minutes
Knowledge	20 minutes	75 minutes	95 minutes

Preparation time

The preparation time is for:

- the invigilator to check your face matches your photo ID and your specific room, workstation or venue setup, as verified and noted in your technical and practice sessions
- the invigilator to guide all candidates in your meeting or at your venue through the exam rules and instructions
- you to log into or open your approved online resources
- the invigilator to check your hard-copy and digital resources
- you to download the exam file(s) and check your candidate number

- you and the invigilator to check your settings, sync your clocks and check that there are no technology issues
- you to review the instructions for the part.

Reading time

The reading time is for you to read the exam questions or other content and, in the Knowledge part, decide which questions and sub-questions you might answer.

Late arrival

If you are late for your online exam meeting or you arrive late at your alternative venue and the preparation or reading periods have already started for any other candidate in your meeting or at the venue, you must not interrupt the invigilator or disturb other candidates. You will have to catch up with your preparation and reading as best you can. No extra time is allowed for late arrivals.

Anyone who arrives once the working time has begun is not allowed to sit the exam.

What to have with you

You need to have ready at your workstation:

- your photo ID
- your confidential candidate number and password
- your hard-copy resources and references on your desk
- your digital resources pre-loaded onto your computer (and logged in if they are subscription access)
- scribble paper and pen or pencil (optional – remember, anything you write down must be destroyed after the exam)
- a stand-alone calculator (optional – you cannot use your phone, but you can use the default calculator app on your computer as long as it is in basic mode)
- water and snacks – see “Food and drinks” below for guidance on refreshments
- any items you need for your comfort during the exam (e.g. warm clothing, ear plugs, lumbar support, approved medication – see guidance under “Adjustments and other requests” for items that require prior approval).

Style guides

There is no prescribed style guide for the exam, but you must use one that is **reasonably current**. In the exam registration form we ask you to specify which style guide you plan to use in the exam so that we can approve it if necessary. In the Manuscript part you need to indicate which style guide you are using so that it can be used to mark your application of the style.

Note that the print 6th edition of the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* (Snooks & Co, Wiley, 2002) is **not** accepted as a style guide for the exam.

Publicly or commercially available style guides

In the exam you have free online access to the *Australian Government style manual*: <https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/>. If you are using this style guide, you should open it in your browser during preparation time.

The *Australian Government style manual* is the only online style guide that you don't need prior approval to use.

For Aotearoa New Zealand candidates, the most commonly used style guide is *Fit to print: the writing and editing style guide for Aotearoa New Zealand* (Hughes & Wallace, Dunmore, 2010). If you want to use this style guide, you'll need to have your own copy. You do not need approval to use this style guide.

Subject to approval, you may also choose to use another readily available online, digital or hard-copy style guide, such as the latest editions of:

- *Chicago manual of style*
- *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*.

If approved, digital versions should be preloaded onto your computer, not accessed via another device. Online versions should be open in your browser (and logged in if subscription only). Your invigilator will check this during preparation time.

In-house style guides

You may use an in-house style guide of an organisation you work for, but only if you can provide a copy for the exam assessors. They do not return this copy to you after marking.

You need to either:

- upload a digital copy of the style guide with your completed exam documents
- mail a hard copy by Express Post to a nominated postal address.

In each case you need to label the style guide with your candidate number but not your name or anything else that may identify you to assessors.

Dictionary

In the exam you will have free online access to the *Macquarie dictionary* via the [MDO](#), including the resources that form part of the dictionary. Invigilators will give you the MDO login credentials for the IPeD exam account at the start of the exam. You may also use your own login credentials if you have your own MDO subscription.

You will also have free online access to the *Te Aka Māori dictionary*.

You may also use a hard-copy edition of the *Macquarie* or any other dictionary, provided the edition is reasonably current.

Online resources, apps and tools

The only websites you are allowed to access in the exam are:

- *Macquarie dictionary online*
- *Te Aka Māori dictionary*
- *Australian Government style manual*
- any pre-approved online style guide or reference
- the specific exam download/upload URLs provided by your invigilator.

You receive specific guidance on what is allowed in each part before and during your technical session for the part. For all parts, you are **not** allowed to:

- use any online resource or access any website that is not one of the 3 resources listed above or that was not specifically approved by the ETT member in your technical session for each part
- search the internet using Google or another search engine
- use any form of AI agent such as ChatGPT, Claude or Copilot
- use interactive websites, apps, tools or add-ons that do exam tasks for you.

Reference books and other resources

The exam is open book, so you may use hard copies or digital editions of other references besides style guides.

Three references should be enough – for example, your preferred style guide, your chosen dictionary and an editing handbook.

Before the exam, you may annotate your reference books and use post-it notes to mark sections. Note that if you annotate a hard-copy reference during the exam, the invigilators will check what you write and you risk having to tear out the page and destroy it after the exam.

You must keep all digital resources you will use in the exam in a dedicated folder on your computer's desktop. If you have resources you normally access via a network server or cloud drive, ensure you move or copy them to a folder on your desktop. Your invigilator will check this folder during preparation time.

IPeD standards and Books without barriers

The *IPeD standards for editing practice* (3rd edition) and *Books without barriers: a practical guide to inclusive publishing* (2nd edition) are pre-approved as digital resources. It is up to you which format you use (PDF, Word or EPUB), as long as you access it on the computer on which you will sit the exam. You may also refer to your own printed copy of either reference.

Other notes and devices

You may create your own set of notes for the exam in either printed or digital (on-screen) form. Your notes must not include extracts from the sample exams.

All digital notes must be combined into a single document so that the invigilator can see you are checking your notes and not something else.

You are not allowed to access your phone, tablet or other device during the exam, so make sure you transfer any notes kept on other devices to the computer on which you will sit the exam.

Checks for handwriting

The exam questions must remain confidential and not be disclosed outside the exam. The requirement to destroy any scribble paper or handwritten notes is to prevent you from copying down and keeping the exam questions. The invigilators will check there is nothing handwritten in your reference books and notes before and after the exam.

During the exam

Speaking with an invigilator

If you need to speak with an invigilator, please attract their attention. If you are in a meeting or room with other candidates, raise your physical hand or digital hand. Once they have seen your raised hand, please wait until the invigilator invites you to speak aloud. If this is during exam working time, speak as quietly as possible so that you minimise any disruption to other candidates. If you are in a Teams breakout room on your own, you may speak aloud to attract the invigilator's attention.

Phones, smartwatches, fitbits and other electronic devices

All electronic devices capable of transmission, including phones and watches, must be turned OFF (not silent) and placed out of reach (e.g. on a shelf behind you).

If you have a valid reason for an exception to this rule, you need to make an adjustment request when you register for the exam so that suitable arrangements can be put in place. Examples include:

- sole carers who may need to be alerted to an emergency phone call during the exam
- devices worn to monitor a medical condition.

Keeping time

Invigilators make timing announcements at key points during the exam to ensure you are aware of the time. You and your invigilator sync your clocks during preparation time.

Toilet breaks

If you need to go to the toilet during the exam, speak with the invigilator first. Before leaving your workstation, you must save your work. The invigilator notes the time you leave the room and the time you return. You must not take anything with you, and your phone must stay in the room, visible at all times.

You do not receive extra time for toilet breaks (unless you received permission in advance due to a medical condition – see “Adjustments and other requests”).

Other breaks and stretching

You are encouraged to stand up and stretch at your workstation every so often. However, you must stay in the invigilator's sight at all times.

Interruptions

Should something unexpected happen, please listen to and obey instructions from your invigilator. Invigilators have guidelines on what to do in a variety of unexpected situations.

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.

Food and drinks

If you need refreshments during the exam, you must have them at your workstation – you will not be allowed to leave to fetch a drink or a snack.

If you are at an alternative venue with other candidates, snacks must not be noisy to unwrap or eat, and must not have strong odours. For example, sweets are usually fine, but potato chips (crisps) or crackers are not.

We recommend keeping all fluids in a bottle or container that has a secure lid to minimise the risk of spills on your equipment.

At end of exam

Once you have finished the exam, the invigilator will ask you to:

- save and close all files
- upload your entire candidate folder to a secure server
- destroy any used scribble paper
- show the invigilator that you have not written exam content in your notes or references
- securely delete all copies of the exam documents on your computer.

Non-attendance

If you are unable to attend the exam on the day, you must:

- contact your invigilator to let them know you will not be taking the exam
- at the earliest possible time after the exam, contact the exam administrator to explain the reason for your no-show.

Depending on the circumstances surrounding your non-attendance (such as a medical emergency, for which you may be asked to provide proof), you may be eligible for a refund of the registration fee, less the emergency cancellation fee.

When you contact the exam administrator about your reasons, they will advise you on applying for a refund and any closing date for the application.

Any registered candidate who does not turn up and does not provide a valid reason will forfeit their registration fee in full.

Request for special consideration

If something happens on the day of the exam that affects your performance during the exam – for example, sudden illness, death in the family, or environmental factors – you may request special consideration in the marking. The exam administrator will provide all candidates who sit the exam with the procedure for making the request.

You must submit your request for special consideration within 7 days of the date of the exam, that is, by 5 pm AWST on Monday 14 December 2026 for the Language part. The Accreditation Board's decision on whether you qualify for special consideration will be final.

Marking

The pass mark for the whole exam is 80% of the total number of marks available in the exam, as well as a minimum of 65% in:

- the Language part as a whole
- each of the 3 components in the Manuscript part
- each of the 2 compulsory questions in the Knowledge part and in the part as a whole.

The exam is marked by IPEd assessors who are all Distinguished or Accredited Editors and who receive special training in the exam marking scheme. The assessors follow a detailed marking guide that recognises there may be more than 1 correct solution to an editorial problem and more than 1 way to mark up a manuscript.

The marking period also includes a moderation process after each part to ensure all marking has been both fair and consistent, and to sort candidates into 3 categories:

- (a) those who clearly passed (achieved at least 80% in the part and at least 65% in each required component for the Manuscript and Knowledge parts)
- (b) those who clearly failed (achieved less than 65% in the part as a whole)
- (c) those whose marks fall somewhere in between a clear pass and a clear fail.

Candidates in category (a) are allowed to progress to the next part (Manuscript or Knowledge), and the moderation process is repeated after each part. Candidates who are still in this category after sitting all 3 parts have clearly passed and will receive their accreditation.

Candidates in category (b) will not be allowed to progress to the next part until they have sat and passed the failed part in a future exam.

The exam documents of the candidates in category (c) are looked at more closely (especially if special consideration needs to be taken into account), and sometimes re-marked by different assessors, to see if any marks need adjusting. Candidates in this category for the Language part are allowed to progress to the next part, but will be advised that they need to improve their performance in the Manuscript part if they are to achieve 80% overall. If the candidate is still in category (c) after the Manuscript part, the moderation process is repeated.

All marking, re-marking and moderation processes are double-blind. Candidates do not know who the assessors are, and assessors do not know who the candidates are, with exam documents identified only by candidate number. For this reason it is critical that you do not disclose your candidate number to anyone other than the exam administrator and your invigilator (assessors are precluded from performing these roles). You must also be careful to avoid including any information on your exam documents that could identify you, such as using your own name in an answer to a question.

Results

Your result is recorded only as either:

- “pass” if you achieved 80% or higher overall, as well as 65% or higher in each of the 3 parts, including in each Manuscript-part component and in the 2 compulsory questions in the Knowledge part; or
- “fail” if you achieved less than 80% overall or less than 65% in any part, in any Manuscript-part component, or in either of the 2 compulsory questions in the Knowledge part.

Most candidates who fail pass 2 out of the 3 parts, but gain insufficient marks to pass all 3 parts or to score 80% overall.

The Accreditation Board notifies you by email of your pass/fail result within 6 weeks of the exam date for each part.

No exam documents are returned to you, whether you pass or fail. That is, you do not see how your exam has been marked or your final score. This policy is to ensure confidentiality and security of exam documents, and also to ensure that there are no “grades” of accreditation from the exam. A candidate who achieves 80% overall is just as accredited as a candidate who achieves 99% overall. Similarly, a candidate who achieves 79% overall receives the same fail result as a candidate who only manages 42% overall.

If you pass the whole exam, you receive a certificate attesting to your accredited status and, if you consent, have your name published in the IPed newsletter and on the IPed website.

If you fail a part, you receive a brief report that indicates any particular areas that let you down, with suggestions on how to improve on these areas of weakness. For the Manuscript and Knowledge parts, the report also indicates which component(s) you passed (if any) and which component(s) you failed.

Candidates who fail only the final part of the exam (Knowledge) or only 1 required component in the Manuscript or Knowledge parts are strongly encouraged to sit the next exam, providing they take steps to improve their skills and knowledge as suggested.

Failed candidates may resit the exam as many times as they like; however, the reduced fee for resitting only applies to 1 subsequent exam.

Appeals

Candidates who fail may appeal their result as long as the appeal is lodged:

- within 14 days of receiving their result and exam report
- in writing (complaints and requests made by phone are not accepted)
- with detailed reasons for seeking review.

More information about how to lodge an appeal is provided after the exam.

Exam documents are not provided to failed candidates for the purpose of the appeal.

If an appeal is lodged, the Accreditation Board appoints an appeals subcommittee to review the appeal, which may include independent re-marking of the candidate’s exam documents. Candidates are notified of the outcome within 3 weeks of the appeal being received.

Appeals must be accompanied by a fee of two-thirds of the standard exam fee to cover the cost of the appeal. This appeal fee is refunded in full if the appeal is upheld.

The appeals subcommittee’s decision is final.

Tips from AEs who have passed the exam

- Decide what resources you are going to use and practise using them effectively.
- Prepare your own set of notes and tag the most frequently used pages or sections of your resources.
- Make the most of the reading time for each part:

Use the reading time for the Language part (5 minutes) to scan the questions and look up your resources to check anything you are not sure of (e.g. the spelling of a word). This part should be straightforward if you've done your preparation.

Use the reading time for the Manuscript part (20 minutes) to do the following:

 - read the publisher's brief
 - 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 those until you are working through the document as they'll jump out at you at that stage.

Use the reading time for the Knowledge part (20 minutes) to choose your 2 elective questions and any elective sub-questions within the 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.

Remember that passing requires you to accrue enough marks, not to complete each question to perfection. Some Knowledge-part questions (including the compulsory 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.
- Plan your exam process and go in with a clear plan of attack. Allocate the time you will spend on each question in the Language and Knowledge parts or each page in the Manuscript part, how you will use your reading time, etc.
- If you cannot finish a question or page in the time you've allowed, leave it and go on to the next question or page. If you have time left at the end, come back and try to finish the bits you didn't get to.
- Do the sample exams, including at least once under exam conditions (i.e. follow the exam time limits and only have with you what you plan to use in the exam). Use this 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 deadline for a boss or client who needs you to get as much done as you can in the given time frame. Keep reminding yourself that you are not going to do a perfect job, and that's okay 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 3 dot points or suggestions or words as an answer, then give 3, not 5 or 7 or 2.
- Type up a checklist of what to include in your style sheet for the Manuscript part and include this in your notes. Remember that spelling errors are not style decisions and need not be included in the alphabetical list.
- In both the Language and Manuscript parts you'll show that you can identify and fix errors in spelling, grammar and style, in single sentences and in a 1,200-word extract, respectively. In the Knowledge part you'll show your understanding and knowledge of other kinds of editing and publishing practices and conventions. You may also 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 conventions you are familiar with – for example, why plain language is important, or how different types of presentation (lists, tables, diagrams, charts, photos, etc.) affect the way readers process information.

Version and change log

2026–27 Guide for candidates: version 2, 18 September 2026.

Changes from version 1.1, 24 August 2026:

- addition of information on technical and practice sessions
- updates to online resources, apps and tools
- changes to exam timing information and exam document file names.

Changes from version 1.0, 6 August 2026:

- change in order of exam parts from Language, Knowledge, Manuscript to Language, Manuscript, Knowledge
- changes to pagination.

Changes from 2024 version:

- update to number of questions in the Language part, more information on the marking and update to the reading and working time
- update to the reading and working time for the Knowledge part
- more information on the marking scheme for the Manuscript part and update to the reading and working time
- update to the registration process
- addition of information about sitting arrangements and practice sessions
- update to adjustment requests section to account for most candidates sitting remotely
- deletion of sections on venue sitting at Cliftons venues
- addition of “Sitting options” section and updates to the remote sitting and alternative venue sitting sections
- deletion of information on hardware and software systems at Cliftons venues
- update to specification of hardware and software systems
- update to information on website access
- updates to exam-day information, including deletion of information on COVID-safe requirements and updates to information about invigilators, exam timing, late arrival, what to bring
- updates to information on style guides, reference books and notes
- updates to information about what happens during and at the end of the exam
- updates to the marking section to account for splitting the exam into parts
- updates to the tips from AEs who have passed the exam to account for splitting the exam into parts
- minor style revisions.

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