

# **SQA Digital Question Papers**

## **2014 - 2015 Summary Report**



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

CALL Scotland

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## **SQA Digital Question Papers**

### **2015 Short Report**

May 2016

This report provides an overview of the development and use of SQA Digital Question Papers (DQPs) in the 2015 examination diet.

CALL has collated and published data on DQPs since they were first introduced in 2008 and the last full report covered the 2013 diet.

To maintain continuity and provide longitudinal data, we have produced short reports for subsequent years beginning from 2014.

The data used in this report was provided by the SQA Statistics team.

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## 2015 Assessment Arrangements

In 2015 there were 43,997 requests for Assessment Arrangements on behalf of 14,489 candidates, representing 11.1% of the total number of entries and 6.67% of the total number of candidates. This represents a small increase in the number of requests and candidates using Assessment Arrangements (Table 1).

**Table 1: Number of candidates and requests for AA, 2008 – 2015**

Year	Number of Candidates requesting AA	% of candidates requesting AA	Number of AA requests / entries	Mean number of AA requests per candidate	% of total entries with AA
2008	12,284	7.2%	44,356	3.61	5.9%
2009	13,041	8%	45,612	3.50	6.2%
2010	13,962	8%	48,416	3.46	6.5%
2011	15,412	9.75%	53,705	3.48	7.32%
2012	16,537	10.30%	57,821	3.49	7.90%
2013	17,263	11.32%	61,680	3.57	8.32%
2014	14,214	10.70%	43,344	3.05	6.42%
2015	14,489	11.1%	43,997	3.04	6.67%

**Table 2: SQA candidates, exam entries and requests for Assessment Arrangements**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% change 2014-15
Total number of SQA candidates	-	159,755	158,908	158,032	160,462	152,428	132,588	142,862	7.75%
Total number of SQA entries	742,000	734,043	740,096	733,696	732,235	741,160	675,361	659,625	-2.33%
Number of AA requests	44,356	45,612	48,416	53,703	57,821	61,680	43,344	43,997	1.51%

The number of requests for Assessment Arrangements fell by almost 30% following the phasing out of Standard Grade examinations in 2014. This was partly due because there were fewer examinations entered overall (-9%), and also because Assessment Arrangements are more commonly requested at lower levels of qualification (Table 3) and were more often used in Standard Grade Foundation and General examinations, which were no longer offered.

While the percentage of National 5 entries where assessment arrangements were requested has increased from 5.7% to 7.8%, it is striking that arrangements for National 5 are requested half as often as they are for Intermediate 2, which are at the same SCQF level. There are clearly other factors

that are influencing the use of Assessment Arrangements in the new qualifications, other than the level of the assessment.

**Table 3: AA requests as a percentage of total entries**

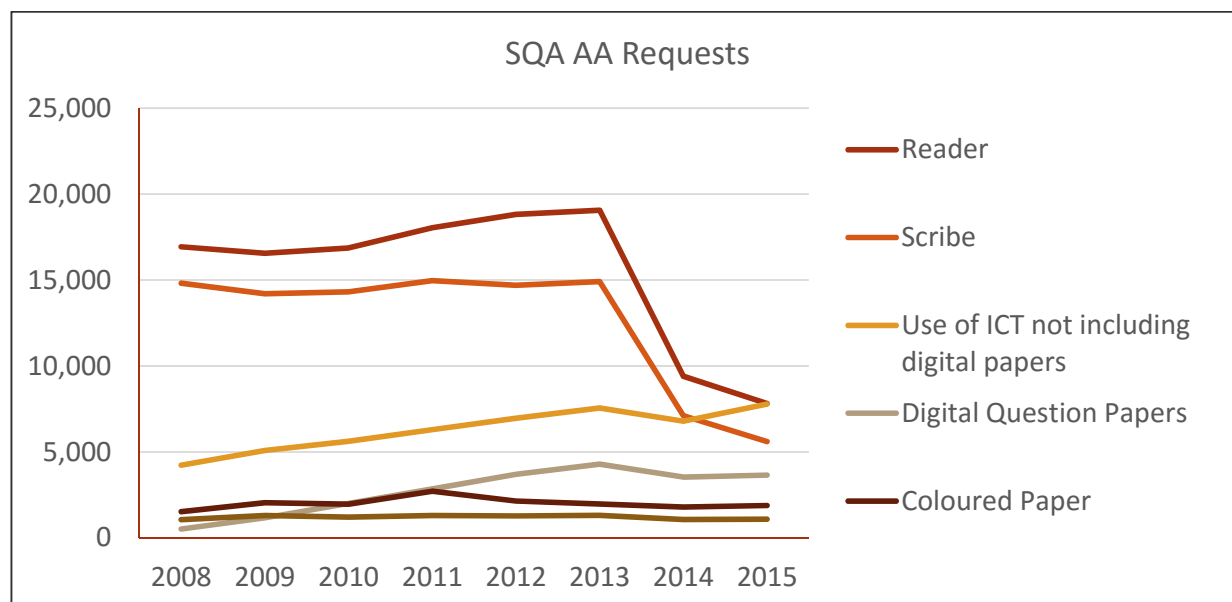
Level	2014	2015
Intermediate 1	18.9%	19.1%
Intermediate 2	10.5%	13.4%
National 5	5.7%	7.8%
New Higher	-	8.2%
Higher	8.3%	10.0%
Advanced Higher	5.5%	6.5%

### Types of Assessment Arrangements

Most requests for permission to use AA specify more than one type of support and so the 43,997 requests in 2015 comprise 97,328 specific types of support (Table 4).

Figure 1 shows the number of requests for the most popular methods of support for the years 2008 to 2015 (excluding Extra Time, Separate Accommodation and Rest Period on the grounds that these are changes to the conditions rather than methods of support). Requests for ICT (including Digital Question Papers) increased by 10% from 2014 to 2015.

The number of requests for readers and scribes continued to fall in 2015: reader requests dropped to 7,819 from 9,399; while requests for scribes fell to 5,600 from 7,105. This follows the reduction of over 50% from 2013 to 2014 (Table 4; Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Number of requests for most popular methods of support, 2008-2014**

**Table 4 Number and type of Assessment Arrangements requested 2008-2015**

Assessment Arrangement	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% Δ 2014 - 2015	Δ 2008 - 2015	% Δ 2008 - 2015
Extra Time	34,530	35,636	36,962	40,800	44,997	47,058	34,494	35,042	1.6%	512	1.5%
Separate Accommodation	25,793	26,381	28,689	31,950	34,744	37,584	24,277	24,486	0.9%	-1,307	-5.1%
Use of ICT inc Digital Question Papers	4,741	6,253	7,622	9,135	10,656	11,844	10,326	11,383	10.2%	6,642	140.1%
Reader	16,936	16,554	16,863	18,032	18,814	19,058	9,399	7,819	-16.8%	-9,117	-53.8%
Scribe	14,811	14,197	14,313	14,962	14,691	14,905	7,105	5,600	-21.2%	-9,211	-62.2%
Digital Question Papers	514	1,167	2,000	2,841	3,694	4,291	3,540	3,652	3.2%	3,138	610.5%
Rest Period	1,517	1,434	1,636	1,664	2,036	2,410	2,232	2,723	22.0%	1,206	79.5%
Prompter / Practical Helper	1,879	2,099	2,404	2,622	2,798	3,351	1,793	1,878	4.7%	355	23.3%
Coloured Paper	1,523	2,050	1,964	2,713	2,144	1,968	1,793	1,660	-6.9%	-219	-11.7%
Enlarged or Adapted Print Question Papers	1,056	1,305	1,209	1,305	1,280	1,310	1,064	1,081	1.6%	25	2.4%
Transcription with correction	1,215	1,179	1,110	1,255	1,402	1,327	863	802	-7.1%	-413	-34.0%
Transcription without correction	751	626	590	721	736	534	421	390	-7.4%	-361	-48.1%
Calculator	556	660	684	653	604	639	341	265	-22.3%	-291	-52.3%
Modified Content (e.g. text description of images)	202	277	267	316	307	233	308	237	-23.1%	35	17.3%
Referral of script to the Principal Assessor	781	540	465	398	361	271	192	187	-2.6%	-594	-76.1%
Adapted Certificate (e.g. in Large Print / Braille)	181	119	139	91	118	100	68	50	-26.5%	-131	-72.4%
Question Paper signed to candidate	43	57	52	43	87	66	32	19	-40.6%	-24	-55.8%
Taped transcription-Live Presentation	30	37	36	40	35	36	26	24	-7.7%	-6	-20.0%
Braille	57	31	59	35	40	23	18	17	-5.6%	-40	-70.2%
Candidate Signs Responses	40	42	38	23	51	37	11	13	18.2%	-27	-67.5%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>107,156</b>	<b>110,644</b>	<b>117,102</b>	<b>129,599</b>	<b>139,595</b>	<b>147,045</b>	<b>98,303</b>	<b>97,328</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>	<b>-9,828</b>	<b>-9.2%</b>

## Analysis by centre type

There were AA requests from a total of 428 centres. The majority of these requests came from Education Authority Secondary Schools (83.4%).

**Table 5: Assessment Arrangements by centre type**

Centre Type	Number of Assessment Arrangements Requests	
	2014	2015
Education Authority - Secondary School	36,540	36,684
Independent Secondary School	4,848	5,492
Further Education - College	1,780	1,691
Education Authority - Special School	120	69
Independent Special School	56	58
Higher Education Institution	0	3
Education Authority - FE College	0	0

## Analysis by primary difficulty

When a centre requests an Assessment Arrangement, the primary factor giving rise to the request for additional support is recorded. Table 6 gives the number of requests analysed by the type of the difficulty: more than 50% of candidates request Assessment Arrangements as a result of dyslexia or another specific learning difficulty.

**Table 6: Assessment Arrangement Requests for all categories of Difficulty 2014-2015**

Difficulty	2014		2015	
	Number of Requests	% of total AAs	Number of Requests	% of total AAs
Dyslexia	17,490	40.35%	17,399	39.5%
Other Specific Learning Difficulty	5,751	13.27%	5,886	13.4%
Physical Health Problems	3,944	9.10%	4,136	9.4%
Autistic Spectrum Condition	3,563	8.22%	3,763	8.6%
Physical or Motor Impairment	2,715	6.26%	2,650	6.0%
Mental Health Problems	1,739	4.01%	2,329	5.3%
Social Emotional Behavioural Difficulty	2,135	4.93%	2,265	5.1%
Other Moderate Learning Difficulty	2,478	5.72%	2,233	5.1%
Visual Impairment	1,658	3.83%	1,778	4.0%
Learning Disability	830	1.91%	652	1.5%
Hearing Impairment	458	1.06%	434	1.0%
Language or Speech Disorder	493	1.14%	351	0.8%
Deaf	53	0.12%	94	0.2%
Blind	26	0.06%	16	0.04%
Deaf & Blind	11	0.03%	11	0.03%

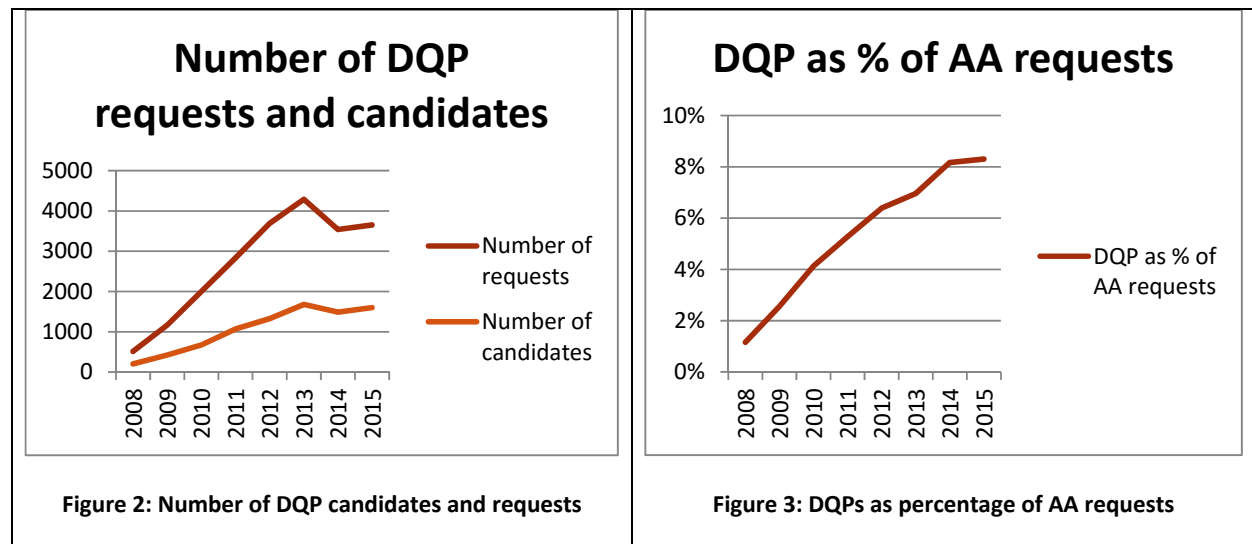
## Digital Question Papers

The number of requests for DQPs increased slightly by 3.2% from 2014 to 2015, and the number of candidates by 7.5%. The number of centres requesting DQPs also increased (Table 7): 44% of Scottish state and independent schools requested Digital Question Papers in 2015.

**Table 7: Digital Question Papers 2008 - 2014**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% Δ 2014 - 2015
Number of requests	514	1,167	2,000	2,832	3,694	4,291	3,540	<b>3,566</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
Number of centres making requests	46	73	101	149	173	188	191	<b>204</b>	<b>6.8%</b>
Number of candidates	204	422	675	1,069	1,327	1,677	1,487	<b>1,599</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
Mean number of requests per centre	11.17	15.99	19.80	19.01	21.35	22.82	18.53	<b>18.92</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
Mean number of candidates per centre	4.43	5.78	6.68	7.32	7.67	8.92	7.79	<b>8.28</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
Mean number of requests per candidate	2.52	2.77	2.96	2.65	2.78	2.56	2.38	<b>2.28</b>	<b>-4.1%</b>

As noted earlier, the phasing out of Standard Grade examinations in 2014 meant that fewer examinations were entered, and as a result the number of requests for all types of assessment arrangements, including DQP, fell. The use of DQPs as increased as a percentage of the total number of requests (Figure 2 and Figure 3).





## DQP uptake: local authorities / sector

Table 8 records the number of requests from each local authority or sector. The range in uptake is striking and it is clear that access to this type of support in examinations is very uneven across Scotland. (The 'half' requests are because the data from SQA does not give the number of requests where the school has requested less than 5, so for these schools it could be between 1 and 5. We therefore use the median of 2.5.)

**Table 8: Requests by local authority / sector 2013 - 15**

Authority/sector	2015	2014	2013	Authority/sector	2015	2014	2013	2012
South Ayrshire	357	275	218	East Lothian	68	143	93	247
Independent	355	242.5	250	West Lothian	56	73.5	134	38
Fife	273	218.5	264	Aberdeen City	54	83	129	52
Perth and Kinross	237	229.5	402	East Ayrshire	40	83	120	35
Aberdeenshire	236	260.5	322	Moray	36	40	27	88
Dundee City	207	301.5	362	Argyll and Bute	32	36	116	92
Highland	176	190.5	236	Renfrewshire	32	40.5	66	
North Ayrshire	176	170	127	West Dunbartonshire	28	30	25	0
Angus	154	154.5	125	Scottish Borders	27	37	46	314
East Renfrewshire	144	113	86	South Lanarkshire	20	36.5	67	30
Dumfries and Galloway	139	109	156	Orkney	19	22	8	16
Clackmannanshire	135	79	94	Inverclyde	11	19	28	11
Edinburgh City	125	143.5	232	Shetland Islands	5	5	8	177
North Lanarkshire	117	88	105	East Dunbartonshire	2	0	8	52
City of Glasgow	114	126	171	Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	0	22	3	62
Midlothian	99	73	87	Stirling	0	10	15	8
Falkirk	92	32	109	Not known			21	117
FE College	86	62	33					

## Engagement and CPD

Table 9 lists conference and training events between 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 where CALL staff delivered CPD or presented on digital question papers or use of ICT in assessments and examinations. In-service training is primarily funded by schools and local authorities while presentations and conferences are supported through CALL core funding from the Scottish Government. This direct engagement with staff and parents helps raise awareness and builds capacity in schools and centres, and will have led at least in part to the increase in use of DQP across Scotland.

**Table 9: Engagement and CPD events 2014-15**

Date	Topic / title	Event & Venue	Number of participants
2/5/14	SQA Digital Question Papers	North Ayrshire	12
19/8/14	SQA Digital Question Papers	Shetland	12
2/9/14	Supportive ICT Practices for National Literacy Units	Webinar, CALL Scotland	10
11/9/14	SQA Digital Question Papers	CALL Scotland, Edinburgh	8
20/9/14	SQA Digital Question Papers	Dyslexia Scotland Education Conference, Stirling	30
1/10/14	SQA Digital Question Papers	Assessment for All Webinar, JISC TechDis	8
2/10/14	SQA Digital Question Papers	CALL Scotland, Edinburgh	8
8/10/14	SQA Digital Question Papers	The Future of Exam Accessibility in the UK Conference, London.	40
3/11/14	SQA Digital Question Papers	St Aloysius College	10
6/11/14	Supportive ICT Practices for National Literacy Units	Education Scotland National Literacy Network, Stirling	10
13/11/14	SQA Digital Question Papers	Dunoon Grammar School	6
21/11/14	SQA Digital Question Papers	CALL Scotland, Edinburgh	8
10/12/14	Supportive ICT Practices for National Literacy Units	CALL Scotland, Edinburgh	50
15/1/15	Speech Recognition in Practice	CALL Scotland, Edinburgh	43
16/12/14	Accessibility Strategies and Accessing the Curriculum	Stirling	40
29/1/15	Supportive ICT Practices for National Literacy Units	CALL Scotland, Edinburgh	50
5/2/15	SQA Digital Question Papers	CALL Scotland, Edinburgh	10
17/2/15	Supporting reading and writing using digital technologies.	Aberdeen Learning Festival, Aberdeen	35
20/2/15	Supportive ICT Practices for National Literacy Units	Aberdeen	45

## Digital Question Papers 2015

11/3/15	Speech Recognition Part 1	Webinar, CALL Scotland	8
18/3/15	Speech Recognition Part 2	Webinar, CALL Scotland	8
24/3/15	Supportive ICT Practices for National Literacy Units for Special Schools	Glasgow	35
26/3/15	SQA Digital Question Papers	South Lanarkshire	12
		<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICPANTS</b>	<b>498</b>



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