NCEA Online

Exam Centre Manager / Supervisor Experience Evaluation Report 2018 Digital Pilots (English, Classical Studies, Media Studies)

Final

NZQA
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NCEA Online

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1.   Introduction

The Exam Centre Manager / Supervisor Survey was designed to measure Exam Centre Manager (ECM) and/or supervisor self-reported experience of invigilating a Digital Pilot examination, including their experience of the dashboard.

Of the ECMs/supervisors who supervised the digital examinations, 105 completed the online survey. Of the 105 respondents, 41 were ECMs and 66 were supervisors[1]. The respondents did not answer all the questions in the survey.

75% (74 of 99) of respondents had been an ECM / supervisor in 2017, and 67% (66 of 99) had managed or supervised a *digital* examination in 2017.

The survey consisted of 14 questions, one of which was open-ended. The first three questions were for ECMs only.

A summary of the main findings is shown below. Appendix 1 is a count of responses for each closed question. Appendix 2 is a full list of the survey questions.

2.   Survey findings

2.1   Overall experience

As stated in footnote 1 below, we do not have a conclusive response rate for this survey. Respondents were asked to rate the relative difficulty of managing digital and paper-based examinations. 44% (44 of 99) of respondents found supervising digital examinations somewhat easier or much easier, which was slightly less than in 2017 when 51% (39 of 76) of respondents had the same sentiment. In 2016 33% (23 of 69) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that supervising digital examinations were more difficult to manage than paper-based examinations.

In the open-ended question, some of the less experienced survey respondents expressed anxiety in managing the examinations, but did acknowledge that experience would increase their confidence. Survey respondents also said that their worry about potential issues that might happen during the examination made their overall experience less positive:

> *"As [ECM] I felt nervous about the digital exam probably because of fear of the unknown more than anything else. It ran like clockwork."*

> *"General management is reasonably easy. It is the first exam that is the most difficult where supervisors are facing the 'unknown' - after L1 English[2] they were much more confident."*

> *"When the exams go well, they are great, but any hitch tends to be a big thing."*

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[1]Three respondents were both ECM and supervisor at different examination sessions. One survey respondent did not tick any role checkbox. Some ECMs or supervisors may have made more than one response to the single survey offered. We have treated each survey response as representative of the ECM/supervisor's overall examination experience, whether that was of a single examination session or multiple sessions. We do not have a conclusive response rate for this survey.

[2] Students sitting the L1 English Digital Pilot examination experienced a short-term loss of connectivity at 11.39am. NZQA investigated the cause and made system changes for the next and subsequent digital examination sessions so this issue did not recur.

"The scope for disaster is greater therefore the stress level is higher (for supervising)."

"The more experience the better it goes."

2.2   Exam Centre Manager tasks

95% (40 of 42) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the support from NZQA for the management of the digital examinations was adequate. This was similar to 2017 when 97% (38 of 39) of respondents had the same sentiment. In 2016 the result was 85% (51 of 60).

While the survey respondents were generally positive about the support they received from NZQA, some commented about the lack of communication from NZQA regarding technical issues during some of the examinations:

"In Level One English when system went down couldn't get through to support phone and no direct contact made by NZQA to let us know what was happening."

"Need to be advised when [NCEA] server crashes when it happens, not after we have candidates having problems over a period of time."

90% (37 of 41) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the support from the schools for the management of the digital examinations was adequate. This was similar to 2017 when 92% (35 of 38) of respondents had the same sentiment. This question was not asked in 2016.

Some of the survey respondents said that their workload has increased because of digital examinations, especially when there are issues with students' digital examination entries:

"I recognised that there was a problem with L3 English students not being entered for digital exam when checking papers and L2 with only half entered for the digital exam, when checking, and alerted PN. This ended up a time-consuming issue with rolls later on."

"As an ECM my work has increased massively since digital were added. A mistake in entering a large group of boys wrongly in L2 English took me hours to sort out when making up rolls etc."

"The time taken using the current website to organise one digital exam with large numbers of candidates takes 10 times as long as any other single paper based exam."

81% (83 of 102) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt confident managing possible breaches of the rules in the digital examination room. This percentage was lower than in 2017, when 94% (81 of 86) responded with the same sentiment, but slightly higher than in 2016 when 79% (65 of 82) of the respondents had the same sentiment.

98% (39 of 40) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they found it easy to set up the room to minimise the risk of breaches of the examination rules. This was greater than both 2017 and 2016 when 87% (33 of 38) and 89% (50 of 56) of the respondents respectively had the same sentiment.

2.3   The dashboard

92% (94 of 102) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the dashboard was easy to operate. This is similar to 2017 when 94% (84 of 89) of respondents had the same sentiment, and an increase from 2016 when overall, 52% (43 of 82) of respondents had the same sentiment.

95% (97 of 102) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the dashboard was useful in assisting with supervision of the digital examinations. This is similar to 2017 when 99% (87 of 88) of

respondents had the same sentiment, and an increase from 2016 when 70% (49 of 70) had the same sentiment.

86% (88 of 102) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the dashboard was useful in managing breaches of the rules. This was similar to 2017 when 86% (70 of 81) of respondents had the same sentiment, and an increase from 2016 when 68% (48 of 71) of respondents had the same sentiment.

98% (39 of 40) of ECM respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they found it easy to allocate candidates to rooms using the dashboard. This was an increase from 2017 and 2016 when 93% (64 of 69) and 93% (46 of 54) of the respondents respectively had the same sentiment.

While the dashboard was generally well received by the survey respondents in the closed questions, the comments about the dashboard were mainly negative – that it was slow, not refreshing on its own, and the difficulties with filtering:

> *"The dashboard was not always functioning when I was supervising (before the 19 minutes failure towards the end of the exam) so I was not always confident I could track connectivity issues students may have been having. It was fortunate there were only a few (17) students in the room."*

> *"The method for filtering notifications for a room seemed overly complicated - and then did not work."*

> *"The biggest problem with the dashboard was that it wasn't refreshing automatically, which worried the supervisors - they wonder what would have happened if there had been lock-outs and breaches to deal with."*

2.4　Candidates switching to paper

51% (53[3] of 104) of respondents had candidates who switched to paper having started the examination digitally. Of these respondents, 32% (17 of 53) agreed or strongly agreed that candidates switching to paper during the examination made supervision harder.

31% (17 of 54) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that candidates switching to paper was disturbing to other candidates.

2.5　Instructions and training provided

95% (96 of 101) of respondents attended an NZQA run training session.

96% (98 of 102) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the guide notes and materials they received for managing digital examinations were useful. This was similar to 2017 and 2016 when 97% (87 of 90) and 92% (78 of 85) of the respondents respectively had the same sentiment. In the open-ended question, survey respondents said that the instructions provided should be simplified:

> *"The manual needs [to] have all instructions to read to the students in one place."*

> *"The digital supervision booklet is too wordy - it needs simplifying."*

> *"Possible breach procedures complicated."*

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[3] 45 of these 53 respondents were either ECM or supervisor for the L1 English exam, in which there was a short term loss of connectivity at 11.39am. NZQA investigated the cause and made system changes for the next and subsequent digital examination sessions so this issue did not recur.

"Pre-exam instructions for the digital exam seem excessively long."

"Having all the printed material available kind of defeats the Digital aspect of the exam somewhat."

88% (84 of 96) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the training they received prepared them well for managing the Digital Pilot Examinations. This was similar to 2017 and 2016 when 85% (70 of 82) and 90% (65 of 72) had the same sentiment. In the open-ended question, survey respondents suggested there is room for improvement to training provided:

"ECM digital training needs to be more 'hands on'."

"The web page looked very different from the practise site so they didn't know where it was located and we hadn't been told this in our training."

"I feel that first time supervisors of digital exams should have the opportunity to attend the training sessions to better advantage than the ECM. When the ECM attends training, the information they are passing on is second hand."

"It would have been beneficial to actually have a trial practice with some of the difficulties which may occur during exam. Lack of experience with this made me less confident during supervision."

2.6   Other comments

Some of the respondents recognised the need for digital literacy training amongst ECMs and supervisors:

"The introduction of further digital exams is going to change the nature of the supervisor recruitment process - digital competence will be a must for the majority of supervisors employed."

"A certain level of computing skills are required for at least one of the supervisors. It is difficult to train for this and assumes expertise. Even simple keyboard errors should be solvable by the supervisor rather than the need to call a technician."

Some also expressed that they are generally positive about digital examinations:

"The more times we have digital exams the better they run."

"Looking forward to seeing this initiative being rolled out at full scale."

Appendix One: Survey Questions

Your roles in respect of each of the exam sessions:

Exam Session	ECM	Supervisor
English Level 1	☐	☐
Media Studies Level 1	☐	☐
Classical Studies Level 1	☐	☐
English Level 2	☐	☐
Media Studies Level 2	☐	☐
Classical Studies Level 2	☐	☐
English Level 3	☐	☐
Media Studies Level 3	☐	☐
Classical Studies Level 3	☐	☐

These questions are for Exam Centre Managers only.

1.   The support from NZQA for the management of the digital examinations was adequate.
Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

2.   The support from the school for the management of the digital examinations was adequate.
Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

3.   I found it easy to set up the exam room(s) to minimise possible breaches of exam rules.
Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

4.   I found it easy to allocate candidates to rooms using the Dashboard.
Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

Dashboard

5.   The Dashboard was easy to operate.
Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

6.   The Dashboard was useful in assisting with supervision of the digital examinations.
Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

7.   The Dashboard was useful for managing possible breaches of the rules.
Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

Change to paper

8.   Candidates switching to paper during the examination made supervision harder.
Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Not applicable

9.   Candidates switching to paper was disturbing to other candidates.
Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   Not applicable

Supervision

10. Please rate the relative difficulty of managing digital and paper-based examination.

| Digital much easier | Digital somewhat easier | Paper somewhat easier | Paper much easier |

11. I felt confident managing possible breaches of the rules in the digital examination.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

Instruction and training

12. The Guide Notes and materials (green ABS stickers, candidate note-making paper, special report forms etc.) I received for managing digital examinations were useful.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

13. The training adequately prepared me for managing the Digital Pilot examinations.

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree   N/A - didn't attend training

14. Do you have any further comments or suggestions about your experience supervising the digital pilot examination? E.g. Room set up, Dashboard

Demographics

I was an ECM or supervisor in 2017.
Yes/No

I managed or supervised a digital examination in 2017.
Yes/No

Please indicate the MoE number for the school at which you managed or supervised digital examinations in 2018.

Appendix Two: Summarised Responses to Closed Questions

Questions for ECMs

Question 1. The support from NZQA for the management of the digital examinations was adequate.

	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	25	59.5
Agree	15	35.7
Disagree	2	4.8
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	**42**	

Question 2. The support from the school for the management of the digital examinations was adequate.

	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	22	53.7
Agree	15	36.6
Disagree	3	7.3
Strongly Disagree	1	2.4
Total	**41**	

Question 3. I found it easy to set up the exam room(s) to minimise possible breaches of exam rules.

	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	24	60.0
Agree	15	37.5
Disagree	1	2.5
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	**40**	

Question 4. I found it easy to allocate candidates to rooms using the Dashboard.

	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	70.0
Agree	11	27.5
Disagree	1	2.5
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	**40**	

Dashboard

Question 5. I found the familiarisation activities useful in my preparation for my digital exam.

	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	41	40.2
Agree	53	52.0
Disagree	8	7.8
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	**102**	

Question 6. The Dashboard was useful in assisting with supervision of the digital examinations.

	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	47	46.1
Agree	50	49.0
Disagree	4	3.9
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Total	**102**	

Question 7. The Dashboard was useful for managing possible breaches of the rules.

	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	29	28.4
Agree	59	57.8
Disagree	13	12.7
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Total	**102**	

Change to paper

Question 8. Candidates switching to paper during the examination made supervision harder.

NCEA Online Final	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	275	19.5
Agree	860	61.1
Disagree	60	4.3
Strongly Disagree	16	1.1
Not applicable	197	14.0
Total	**1,408**	

Question 9. Candidates switching to paper was disturbing to other candidates.

	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	3.8
Agree	13	12.5
Disagree	28	26.9
Strongly Disagree	9	8.7
Not applicable	50	48.1
Total	**104**	

Supervision

Question 10. Please rate the relative difficulty of managing digital and paper-based examination.

	Count	Percentage
Digital much easier	18	18.2
Digital somewhat easier	26	26.3
Paper somewhat easier	29	29.3
Paper much easier	26	26.3
Total	**99**	

Question 11. I felt confident managing possible breaches of the rules in the digital examination.

	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	22	21.6
Agree	61	59.8
Disagree	18	17.6
Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
Total	**102**	

Instructions and training

Question 12. The Guide Notes and materials (green ABS stickers, candidate note-making paper, special report forms etc.) I received for managing digital examinations were useful.

	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	34	33.3
Agree	64	62.7
Disagree	4	3.9
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Total	**102**	

Question 13. The NZQA training session adequately prepared me for managing the Digital Pilot examinations.

	Count	Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	27.7
Agree	56	55.4
Disagree	10	9.9
Strongly Disagree	2	2.0
N/A - didn't attend training	5	5.0
Total	**101**	

About you

Question 15. I was an ECM or supervisor in 2017.

NCEA Online Final	Count	Percentage
Yes	74	74.7
No	25	25.3
Total	**99**	

Question 16. I managed or supervised a digital examination in 2017.

	Count	Percentage
Yes	66	66.7
No	33	33.3
Total	**99**	