Instructions for conducting AAT Computer-Based Assessments (CBA)

Version date: December 2018

Contents

Document change history

This version replaces all previous versions of the document.

It is the responsibility of the AAT approved organisation to ensure that all staff involved in the delivery of AAT qualifications and assessments familiarise themselves with this version of the document.

There have been a number of changes to the formatting, layout and content, compared to previous versions.

The document is maintained electronically and may be updated from time to time. Electronic copies are version controlled. However, printed copies are not subject to this control.

1   Introduction

This document is designed to inform and assist Assessment Centre[1] staff in administering AAT's computer-based assessments. It covers the main requirements for the appointing of key staff and details their responsibilities in regard to the administration and support of AAT assessments and the assessment platform.

The document details the operational responsibilities of Assessment Centre staff before, during and after an assessment sitting. It includes, but is not limited to, important information pertaining to pre-assessment checks of the assessment room and students, reasonable adjustments, the use of Assessment books and guidance documents, Invigilator announcements, assessments that require the use of third-party software and upload requirements, troubleshooting guides, timer notifications, submission of incident report forms and malpractice.

The information within this guidance document must be read, understood and adhered to by all staff who are involved with AAT's assessments.

2   Roles and responsibilities

Every approved Assessment Centre is required to have at least one dedicated person in each of the following roles:

- Computer based assessment (CBA) Administrator
- Invigilator
- CBA Technical Contact.

Specific responsibilities associated to the above three roles are stated in the sub-sections below and must be read, understood and adhered to in full.

2.1   CBA Administrators

The CBA Administrator is responsible for the assessment environment and the scheduling and conduct of assessments.

The Assessment Centre must appoint a CBA Administrator who will be responsible for:

- scheduling practice and live assessments
- assessment security
- assessment supervision
- the assessment environment
- the overall conduct of the assessment.

CBA Administrators are also responsible for appointing suitably qualified and experienced people to act as Invigilators. For every assessment session, there must be at least one CBA Administrator and one Invigilator. These cannot be the same person.

CBA Administrators must be familiar with the *SecureAssess Centre User Guide*, so that they can effectively and efficiently manage all aspects of the assessment software relevant to the scheduling and conducting of the assessment(s). This document can be found under the Support resources tab on the **CBA Support page** (**aat.org.uk/cba**)

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[1] The term Assessment Centre is used here to describe any location where an assessment is taking place. This includes both Training Provider and Assessment Venue. However, where specific requirements relate to the Training Provider or Assessment Venue, they will be mentioned by specific name.

The CBA Administrator must advise teaching staff and students what the Assessment Centre's procedures are for scheduling an assessment (practice and live) and how much advanced notice is required.

The CBA Administrator is responsible for briefing Invigilators and for ensuring that they are familiar with the appropriate procedures governing the conduct of assessments.

The CBA Administrator is not permitted to perform the role of the Invigilator or CBA Technical Contact.

2.2 Invigilators

The Invigilator's role is to ensure the integrity and conduct of the assessment process and to provide immediate and effective support to students for any live assessment issue.

Invigilators perform a key role in upholding the integrity of the assessment process. They are responsible for the proper conduct of the assessment and for supervising AAT assessments. They must be familiar with, and have access to, the CBA support resources and troubleshooting guides on the **CBA Support Page** as part of their training and during the invigilation of live assessments.

Although the Assessment Centre does have discretion to decide who is appropriate to undertake this role, anyone with a potential conflict of interest must not be allowed to act as an invigilator. People with a conflict of interest include, but are not limited to:

- students and relatives / family members of any AAT student
- tutors who have been involved in preparing students for any of the units that are being assessed. For synoptic assessments, this includes any unit at the level being assessed

Invigilators may not perform any other responsibilities whilst invigilating an assessment sitting, such as acting as a reader or a scribe for an assessment, as part of a student's reasonable adjustment.

The Assessment Centre is expected to make a judgement as to whether a potential invigilator or scribe / reader has a conflict of interest for any other scenario not listed above.

An invigilator must always be present within the assessment room. However, Assessment Centres may use computer technology, for example CCTV, to support the monitoring of students.

If there is only one invigilator, he or she must be able to summon assistance quickly and easily, without disturbing students or leaving the assessment room, to ensure that the monitoring of the assessment is uninterrupted.

Invigilators must be familiar with assessments that require the use of third-party software, and how the third-party software works. For further information, see section 6 and Appendix 2.

The Invigilator is not permitted to perform the role of the CBA Administrator or CBA Technical Contact.

There must be at least one invigilator for every 20 students at all times.

2.3 CBA Technical Contacts

The CBA Technical Contact is responsible for the centre's ICT equipment and for providing immediate and capable technical support.

CBA Technical Contacts are responsible for ensuring that the assessment software is installed on each PC used by students for live and practice assessments. They are also required to ensure that each PC meets the minimum and supporting technical requirements to run AAT assessments and that these are regularly checked following any local changes to PC settings, or tested following any updates to the assessment platform, prior to any sittings. This role must also be able to troubleshoot any technical issues, before, during or after any assessments take place.

The minimum and supporting specifications for PC setup can be found in the *AAT SecureClient Installation and Testing Guide* on the **CBA Support Page**.

CBA Administrators and Invigilators must have access to IT support, via the CBA Technical Contact, for the installation of the software and upgrades and to deal with any complications that may arise with the Assessment Centre's system.

The CBA Technical Contact must also have access to the troubleshooting guides available from the **CBA Support Page**, during live assessments, to support the Invigilator in resolving any technical issues that may occur. See also section 8 of this document.

3   Pre-assessment checks

3.1   Assessment environment

The assessment area and equipment must be checked in advance of the assessment to ensure they meet required standards for the assessment.

The design and layout of the assessment area and equipment must comply with the International Organisation for Standardisation's **code of practice for the use of IT in the delivery of assessments (ISO/IEC 23988:2007)** and must include:

- a stable workstation for each student with sufficient space for the student to work
- an adjustable chair for each student
- freedom from glare that might prevent a student from seeing what is on the screen
- work stations positioned (or protected using privacy filters) so that any student's screen cannot easily be read by any other student
- ventilation to cope with the heat generated by equipment.

Assessment rooms must also have at least one silent clock that is easily visible to all students, and must be checked to ensure that it is showing the correct time prior to any assessment sitting.

3.2   Scheduling assessments

All students must be registered with AAT before they can be scheduled to sit AAT assessments. Students are strongly advised to sit a practice assessment to familiarise themselves with the assessment software, format and environment, before being scheduled for a live assessment.

AAT sets the assessment windows for the synoptic assessments. The current synoptic assessment schedule is available on AAT's website from a link on the **synoptic assessment page.** Assessment Centres are free to set their own timetable for all other assessments, which are available on-demand and can be scheduled up to 28 days in advance.

All assessment must be scheduled via **SecureAssess** (**aat.secureassess.co.uk/secureassess**). For guidance on how to schedule an assessment, please refer to the *AAT SecureAssess Centre User Guide*, under the Support resources tab on the **CBA Support Page.** There is also an instructional video called *How to create an assessment* on this webpage.

All scheduled assessments can be accessed within the Assessment Schedules and Invigilation tab on **SecureAssess**. The invigilation tab will show you a full list of the assessments due to take place on the day and contains the duration and invigilation requirements.

Students may sit their assessments at a venue that is unconnected to their Training Provider, providing the venue has been approved by AAT to deliver the assessments. Assessment Venues can schedule externally-assessed assessments, but Training Providers must schedule any internally-assessed assessments.

3.3   Before the assessment

Before the start of every assessment session, it is important that the instructions for Invigilators are understood by all Invigilators and that all pre-assessment checks have been carried out.

Prior to the start of the assessment the CBA Administrator and Invigilators must ensure that:

- the room and equipment meet the assessment requirements
- they are familiar with the assessment instructions
- they are familiar with the assessment platform and the *SecureAssess Centre User Guide*, located on the **CBA support page**
- they are familiar with the CBA support resources and troubleshooting guides, located on the **CBA support page** (see also section 8)
- they carry out checks of the photographic proof of identity (see section 3.4) which each student must provide, and are fully satisfied as to the identity of each student
- they complete attendance records
- any Reasonable Adjustment requests are made (see section 3.7)
- they are familiar with any third-party software required for the assessment
- students are familiar with, and can operate, the assessment platform and any third-party software that is available at the Assessment Centre and appropriate to their assessment
- students do not have in their possession any study notes, revision materials, text books, or any of the excluded items listed in section 3.6 (these materials must be placed out of the reach of students)
- blank rough paper, which can easily be identified as being handed out by the Assessment Centre, is available in the assessment room (students are not permitted to bring their own rough paper or start using the rough paper before the start of the assessment)
- all mobile devices are switched off, packed away, and placed out of the reach of students (see section 3.6)
- students do not have access the internet or email for the duration of the assessment.
- any permitted equipment, such as pens, pencils, erasers and calculators are checked, and either be stored in a transparent pencil case or placed on the student's desk.
- any required *student guidance documents* (for assessments that require the use of third-party software and uploading evidence to SecureClient) have been printed and given to the student, if requested. Only the CBA Administrator or Invigilator can print and circulate these documents for use in the assessment room
- any requested *AASW or UACS Assessment books* have been printed and given to the student, if requested. Only the CBA Administrator or Invigilator can print and circulate these documents for use in the assessment room

- students have been provided with their keycodes. The keycode must be entered by the student and **not** by the CBA Administrator or Invigilator
- they inform students that they are now subject to the rules of the assessment and read out the relevant Invigilator's announcement (Appendix 1)
- they are fully aware of the duration of the assessment (for further details, see Invigilation tab of **SecureAssess**).

Note: If any student is absent for the assessment or is present but makes no attempt to open the assessment, the student should be marked as Void: Not yet started. This includes where scheduling errors have been made by the CBA Administrator. Assessment Centres will not be invoiced for an assessment if the Terms and Conditions have not been accepted by the student.

3.4   Proof of identity

All students are required to provide photographic proof of identity before they are permitted to take an assessment. The following documents are acceptable:

- current valid (signed) full UK or country of origin passport
- current valid (signed) national identity (ID) card
- current valid European Economic Area (EEA) member state ID card
- current full or provisional UK/EU photocard driving licence
- current residency permit issued by the Home Office
- current valid CitizenCard (accompanied by a credit/debit card as proof of signature).

If a student is taking the assessment at a Training Provider at which they are registered, and has none of the above forms of identify, the student may sit the assessment at the Training Provider's discretion, providing at least two members of staff at the Training Provider can confirm the student's identity with confidence. Where this happens, it must be recorded with a declaration signed by both members of staff.

If the student's registered name is different to that on the identity document, the student must present a marriage or deed poll certificate (or national equivalent for the country in which the student is sitting the assessment).

For any of the above, a clear and legible photocopy can be presented only if it is accompanied by an official letter, issued in the last 12 months from a solicitor/the Home Office, stating where the original documents are and confirming the student's identity.

No other forms of identification will be accepted.

3.5   Printing out AQ2016 UACS (Using Accounting Software) and AASW (Access to Accounting Software) live Assessment books

The Assessment book and logs for each of the scenarios for the current Using Accounting Software (UACS) and Access to Accounting Software (AASW) assessment can be downloaded from the AAT's **Assessment books webpage** (**aat.org.uk/assessment/aq2016-uacs-access-aasw-live-assessment-books**) if a student requests a hard copy to take into the assessment.

The Assessment books are password protected. The passwords are available on the **SecureAssess** homepage.

Every time you download and print a hard copy of any Assessment book, you must complete the *UACS or AASW scenario printout log* and retain this for inspection by AAT during any scheduled or unannounced site visits.

AAT staff or your External Quality Assurer (EQA) may ask to see a copy of these log books to check that you are adhering to our regulations concerning the handling of live assessment material.

This is live material, so you **must** adhere to the following criteria:

- All students must be consulted prior to the start of their assessment as to whether they would like a paper copy of the Assessment book
- You must ensure that the Assessment book you download matches the scenario you have scheduled your student for. **NOTE**: If students are given the incorrect Assessment book it will be considered maladministration, and the assessment may not be marked
- If your students are re-sitting, you must select a different scenario to the one they originally sat to safeguard the integrity of the unit
- Paper copies must be stored securely – for example, in an exam office safe.
- You are required to securely dispose of all printed copies immediately after the assessment – see guidance on above dedicated webpage
- You must NOT use these *Assessment books* as a teaching reference
- You must NOT print an *Assessment book* out more than 24 hours in advance of the live assessment
- You must NOT allow students to open and read the content of the *Assessment book* before the assessment commences.

N.B. Any occasion where a student is given access to this material outside of an invigilated assessment will be considered malpractice.

3.6   Student equipment

Students may bring with them pens, pencils, erasers and calculators. No other equipment is allowed. Within the assessment room, these must either be placed on the student's desk or stored in a transparent case. All equipment, including the transparent case, must be checked and approved by the Assessment Centre prior to the start of the assessment.

Students are permitted to use a scientific calculator.

Calculators **must not** be used if they:
- emit audible tones
- can print
- allow text, dictionaries or mathematical formulas to be stored and retrieved
- can communicate with other devices or the internet
- are functions of a personal organiser or any digital device.

The following items are **not** permitted:
- mobile phones
- dictionaries
- computers other than those being used for the assessment
- memory sticks
- study text, revision cards, course notes
- books and papers
- any other form of digital, electronic, recording or programmable equipment, including but not limited to:
    - tablets
    - Dictaphones
    - smart watches
    - cameras in any form, including wearable devices.

CBA Administrators / Invigilators must add to this list any other restrictions in accordance with their centre policies, such as those applying to smoking, eating and drinking, especially where these have a bearing on the security of the assessment, or the suitability of the assessment environment.

3.7 Reasonable adjustments for students with particular assessment requirements

For students with particular assessment requirements, reference should be made to the *Guidance on the Application of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration in AAT Assessments*, which sets out special access arrangements. Further information is available on AAT's **Reasonable adjustments and special consideration webpage** (**aat.org.uk/reasonableadjustments**).

Where possible, all reasonable adjustment requests must be submitted to AAT prior to the start of the assessment.

If there is a non-technical issue affecting a student during or directly before an assessment, for example illness, traumatic event or bereavement, *Special consideration form 13.4* must be completed and emailed to **assessment.operations@aat.org.uk**, along with supporting evidence, by the end of the next working day after the assessment. This form can be retrieved from the above website and within the guidance document.

A student may require assistance, such as the use of a reader or a scribe, during their assessment as part of their reasonable adjustment. The Assessment Centre has the discretion to decide who is appropriate to undertake this role. However, anyone with a potential conflict of interest must not be allowed to assist the student. People with a conflict of interest include, but are not limited to:

- students and relatives / family members of any AAT student
- tutors who have been involved in preparing students for any of the units that are being assessed. For synoptic assessments, this includes any unit at the level being assessed
- anyone acting as a CBA Administrator, CBA Technical Contact and / or Invigilator for that assessment sitting

3.8 Invigilator announcement

The Invigilator announcement must be notified to all students prior to the start of every assessment session. These announcements vary depending on the style of assessment.

This can either be:

- read aloud to all students within the assessment room
- provided in printed form for students to read and sign, to verify their understanding

Appendix 1 contains these instructions, along with specific instructions for standard assessments, the Advanced Diploma Synoptic (AVSY) assessment, and for other assessments that require the use of third-party software.

4   During the assessment

Student responses to assessment tasks must be their own unaided work.

An Invigilator must always be present within the assessment room and must supervise students throughout the whole assessment. Invigilators must give their whole attention to the

proper conduct of the assessment and must not undertake any other activities whilst invigilating.

4.1 Live assessment issues

Before the assessment starts, the Invigilator must inform the student(s) that if they experience any issue they should make the Invigilator aware of this immediately – see Invigilator announcement in Appendix 1.

This will allow the Invigilator to resolve any local issues, request the assistance of the CBA Technical Contact or contact AAT to request support for any issues that could potentially disadvantage a student(s) during their assessment.

Technical help for any hardware and software problems must be available throughout the assessment. For guidance on common troubleshooting areas, see section 8 as well as the Troubleshooting guides on the **CBA Support Page.**

4.2 Breaks during assessment

It is recommended that for assessments over 1.5 hours, students are permitted to take a break. Invigilators must agree the timing and duration of the break in advance of the assessment and inform students before starting the test. Students must be supervised throughout the break. The duration of the supervised break should generally not exceed 15 minutes.

All students in the assessment room must adhere to agreed breaks at the same time.

4.3 Emergencies and incidents

If an emergency occurs during the assessment, for example a fire alarm or bomb threat, the assessment room must be evacuated in accordance with the instructions of the appropriate authority.

The Invigilator must pause the assessment session on **SecureAssess** before leaving the assessment room, unless the severity of the incident prevents this. If you are unable to pause the assessment, you must inform AAT at the earliest opportunity, and by the end of the next working day at the latest.

Students must be supervised whilst they are out of the room and reminded that they remain under assessment conditions.

Before restarting the session, the Invigilator is advised to allow students approximately five minutes to compose themselves. The session may be restarted with no loss of time, unless it was not possible to immediately pause the assessment(s).

All incidents, such as technical problems, fire alarms etc. must be recorded in an incident report by the centre, which must be emailed to **centre.support@aat.org.uk** by the end of the next working day after the assessment. The incident report form can be accessed and printed from the invigilation pack via **SecureAssess**. If AAT's investigation of the incident confirms that, through no fault of their own, students have been unfairly disadvantaged, AAT will take this into account when their performance in the assessment is reviewed.

Invigilators must be familiar with the **modify duration** feature before the assessment, and for the assessments that this feature applies to. This feature is described in section 6.3.

Invigilators must report all uses of the 'modify duration' feature to AAT as part of an incident report.

It should be noted that the consideration of incidents during the assessment, or other extenuating circumstances, does not automatically guarantee a pass or grade increase for the assessment.

5 End of the assessment

5.1 Timer remaining notifications

Invigilators must be familiar with the time allocation of assessments (see Invigilation tab of **SecureAssess**).

Students will receive onscreen notifications of the time remaining at 30, 15 and 5 minutes before the end of the assessment within SecureClient. These show by the assessment clock.

Invigilators must announce the time remaining for the assessment, as a minimum at:

- 15 minutes before the end of the assessment; and
- 5 minutes before the end of the assessment.

The time remaining announcements are based on the full duration of the assessment, from the time the Invigilator unlocks the assessment. However, students are advised to manage their own time to ensure they allow themselves sufficient time to answer and review all questions and, where applicable, upload all their evidence, before the assessment finishes.

Students **should not** rely solely on the Invigilator's time remaining announcements, as some students will spend longer reading the Introduction page or complete the assessment in less time, and will therefore not benefit from the announcements.

All assessments will close automatically at the end of the allocated time or when a student clicks 'Submit Assessment' and confirms the submission details within the pop-up box.

See section 6.2 for additional guidance on time remaining notifications and uploading for assessments that require the use of third-party software.

5.2 Assessment submission

Using the invigilation screen of **SecureAssess**, Invigilators must ensure that the students' assessments have moved into a finished state at the end of the assessment. This will be confirmed with the display of a green tick ✓ , meaning the assessment has been sent to AAT. For further information on what to do if an assessment does not upload, see section 8.5 of this document.

5.3 Collecting rough paper and any printed Assessment books and guidance documents

Once a student has finished their assessment and notified the Invigilator, the Invigilator must collect any rough paper and / or printed copies of *Assessment books* and / or printed copies of *student guidance documents*, given to the student at the start of the assessment. The student must not be allowed to leave the assessment room with these. Any rough paper and / or *Assessment book* and / or *student guidance documents* given to the student must be securely destroyed, in line with the guidance in section 3.5 of this document.

5.4   When to submit an incident report

An incident report must be submitted for any live technical or non-technical issue that disadvantages a student. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, screen freezing, power cut, building evacuation and mobile phone ringing.

For an occasion where a student has identified an issue which has disrupted them, an incident report must be submitted. Incident reports are located within the Invigilation Pack, which can be found on the Assessment Schedules or Invigilation tabs of **SecureAssess**.

The incident report must be completed with as much information as possible related to the incident and sent to **centre.support@aat.org.uk**, along with any relevant supporting documents, by the end of the next working day after the assessment.

For incidents related to issues that have prevented a student from uploading their assessment evidence, see also section 6.3.

If appropriate, also include a completed copy of *Special consideration form 13.4*, in line with section 3.7 of this document.

5.5   Results

Assessment results are published online on via **MyAAT** (**aat.org.uk/login**).

For students, these are accessed within the Your Assessment Results service, and for Training Providers, these are accessed within the Centre Assessment Results service. Assessment Venues do not have access to student result data.

Results for assessments that are wholly computer-marked are available within 24 hours after the assessment has been submitted.

Results for assessments that are wholly or partially human-marked by AAT are released six weeks from the date that the assessment has been submitted.

Synoptic windows for Advanced and Professional qualifications last for seven days (Monday to Sunday). Although synoptic windows for the Foundation qualification are open longer, each seven-day period (Monday to Sunday) is considered as one window. Results will be released online six weeks from the Friday of each synoptic assessment window.

5.6   Restrictions on re-sitting assessments

Once a student has taken an assessment, whether they are successful or not, they will be restricted from re-sitting the assessment in accordance with the following parameters:

- computer-marked assessments – three calendar days, and only after the result is released.
- human-marked assessments – between 31 days and six weeks, and only after the result is released
- synoptic assessments – the next sitting window after the result has been released.
- if re-sit rules are applicable, please follow the appropriate guidelines on the AAT's **Assessment re-sits – AQ2016 webpage** (**aat.org.uk/training/qualifications/aq2016-faqs-resits**)

6 Assessments that require third-party software

6.1   Assessment requirements

Invigilators must be familiar with the upload requirements of assessments that use third-party software.

Students taking *Access to Accounting Software* (AASW), *Using Accounting Software* (UACS) and *Advanced Diploma synoptic* (AVSY) are required to use third-party software as part of their study for the unit and for the assessment.

The capabilities of the software used for each assessment, and the accepted file formats for the assessment evidence, are detailed within Appendix 2.

Before students upload their evidence to the assessment platform, they are required to check that all their work has been saved correctly, and that the file can be opened. This is particularly important if they have amended the format of the file.

Once the student has completed their assessment evidence within the required software, they must upload it to the relevant assessment task within SecureClient, before the end of the assessment.

AAT will make every effort to open and mark evidence submitted in other formats.

If AAT are unable to open or convert these files, the evidence they contain will not be marked. Evidence submitted in zip files present a risk to PCs and will not be opened or marked.

You can also find the information on document formats on AAT's **Qualification Specifications webpage** (**aat.org.uk/about-aat/qualification-development**).

6.2   Uploading assessment evidence

In addition to the guidance in section 5.1, Invigilators must use the time remaining announcements to notify students to check, save and upload any completed evidence to the correct task within SecureClient before the end of the assessment.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they manage their time during the assessment to allow sufficient time to check, save and upload the correct file(s), in the correct format, to the correct task within their assessment, and to notify the Invigilator if they are unable to.

Failure to upload their work before the assessment finishes may result in the student being assessed as not yet competent.

It is the Invigilator's responsibility to ensure that students are aware of this and that all guidance, including any applicable troubleshooting guide, is followed to ensure that students can upload the correct file(s) before submitting the assessment. Where this is not possible, the necessary steps must be taken by the Invigilator to submit the file(s) to AAT, in accordance with AAT's incident reporting process (see section 6.4).

If a student experiences issues uploading their evidence, an upload failed message will appear on-screen. The on-screen message will include a description of the issue; these messages and a resolution for each are detailed on the *student guidance documents*. If the student is unable to resolve the issue, the Invigilator should refer to section 8.8 of the Troubleshooting section in the first instance.

6.3 Modifying the duration of an in-progress assessment

You can modify the duration of an in-progress assessment that requires the use of third-party software, **by up to 15 minutes**, using the Modify Duration button on the Invigilation tab of **SecureAssess**.

This feature must only be used in the event of a technical or non-technical issue that prevents a student from uploading their evidence.

For the added time to show, the Invigilator must pause the assessment from the Invigilation tab of **SecureAssess** before closing and re-launching SecureClient on the student's PC. After the student has entered their keycode and accepted the terms and conditions again, the revised time allowance will show on the assessment timer. The assessment should then be un-paused on the Invigilation tab.

Important:
For the Advanced Diploma synoptic (AVSY) assessment, any time added is split evenly between the two Parts, regardless of the student being in Part 2 at the time of modifying the duration. If you need to modify the duration of the assessment whilst the student is in Part 2, you will need to add 30 minutes to ensure that the student receives an additional 15 minutes in Part 2.

The duration must only be modified in line with the guidance in this section of the document. It must not be modified for any other reason.

Assessment Centres using this feature must submit an incident report to AAT by the end of the next working day after the assessment (see section 5.4) to explain why it was used. AAT monitors the use of this feature and will follow up on any unreported use.

6.4 Submitting incident reports with containing student evidence

If a student experiences an issue that prevents them from uploading their work, and the Invigilator is unable to resolve it, the Invigilator must:

- ensure that the work has been saved by the student. Invigilators must **not** re-save student's work on the student's PC or to any other PC
- attach the student's work to an email or USB stick, in preparation to send to AAT
- follow the incident report submission steps in section 5.4 of this document and send to **centre.support@aat.org.uk** along with the student's evidence by the end of the next working day after the assessment date.

If any student evidence is found to have been tampered with, last saved outside of the assessment sitting or submitted outside of timescale, AAT reserve the right not to accept the work.

6.5 Deleting student work after the assessment

Once the student has uploaded their evidence and submitted the assessment, the Invigilator **must** delete any files, including any saved *Assessment books* from the PC.

This check must be carried out in all locations on any machines being used for the assessment, including from the Desktop, Recycling Bin, Downloads or Temporary Files folders, and any other folder used by the student to save work. This is to ensure these are not accessible to other students and staff.

These instructions also apply to any evidence saved as a result of a technical issue that prevented the student from uploading their work and needs to be submitted with an incident report to AAT (see section 6.4). Once AAT have confirmed receipt of the incident report and evidence, the email and files must be deleted, including from any other equipment used, i.e. a USB.

Students and / or any Assessment Centre staff must not print, distribute or re-save student's work or assessment materials to any other PC, with the exception of Assessment Centre staff printing *Assessment books*, for the purposes described in this document. AAT will check PCs during unannounced site visits – any student work or assessment material found will be investigated in line with our malpractice policy.

Regular checks must be carried out prior to any assessment session to ensure that no student work or assessment materials are saved to the PC and are accessible. This includes, but is not limited to, checks against any all accessible locations and folders mentioned in the first paragraph of this section. This is particularly the case for any deleted files or folders that have been recovered after deletion.

7   Malpractice and irregularities

AAT's *Malpractice / Maladministration policy and guidance* can be found on the **Quality assurance resources** webpage (**aat.org.uk/support/quality-assurance/resources**).

Malpractice must not be tolerated in any circumstances. If Assessment Centre staff observe any form of malpractice, such as cheating, collusion, use of electronic devices during an assessment, any behaviour that is inappropriate under assessment conditions, or any instances of malpractice in line with AAT's *Malpractice / Maladministration policy and guidance* and / or the Assessment Centre's internal policy, they must take immediate steps to remove the students and / or staff committing malpractice from the assessment room, and inform the CBA Administrator and AAT.

Students or staff must not print, share or copy assessment material, assessment content or responses, this includes, but is not limited to:

- Taking photos of live assessment material
- Taking videos of live assessment material
- Taking screenshots of live assessment materials
- Sending, forwarding or replying to emails which contains live assessment material
- Circulating any live assessment material outside of the assessment room
- Circulating any live assessment material within the assessment room that is not permitted for use during the assessment.

Unauthorised printing or sharing of assessment material by members of staff or students will be treated as malpractice. Assessment material must be kept securely and treated as confidential. Student evidence completed outside of the assessment platform must be handled in line with the information within sections 6.4 and 6.5 of this document.

All incidents of malpractice will be investigated by AAT. Any proven cases of malpractice could lead to sanctions, withdrawal of approval status, results being declared null and void or expulsion from AAT. The Invigilator must note the time and nature of any incidents and email full details to **aatquality.assurance@aat.org.uk** the same day as the assessment.

Templates for incident reports can be printed from SecureAssess. Please also refer to AAT's *Malpractice / Maladministration policy and guidance* **,** which includes procedures for dealing with suspected malpractice**.**

AAT reserves the right to charge Assessment Centres for development and other costs incurred by AAT in replacing live assessment materials that have been compromised, as a result of any breach in the security of materials, and which can be attributed to the actions of the Assessment Centre, or students associated with these organisations.

8 Troubleshooting

8.1 Troubleshooting guides

All guides can be found within the Troubleshooting Guides tab of the **CBA Support page.**

Whilst this section contains some troubleshooting guides, they are designed for quick reference against the most commonly reported live assessment issues. Where possible, you should always refer to the Troubleshooting guides via the **CBA Support page** in case they have been updated.

Invigilators must be aware of the information below and the troubleshooting guides on the CBA support page, prior to invigilating assessments. Invigilators and CBA Technical Contacts must have access to the information below and the CBA Support page during live assessments.

8.2 Minimum requirements

In the case of general functionality problems, the CBA Technical Contact must first make sure that the machines in use meet the minimum requirements. Refer to *AAT's SecureClient Installation and Testing Guide* under the Support resources tab of the **CBA Support page**.

8.3 Up to date version of SecureClient

To ensure that you have the most recent version of SecureClient installed on the computer, first check the homepage of **SecureAssess** or the **CBA Support Page**. This will tell you the most up to date version numbers.

To check the version that is installed on your computers, open SecureClient and click the "Surpass" button at the bottom of the login window, as below. This will display the version number of your SecureClient.
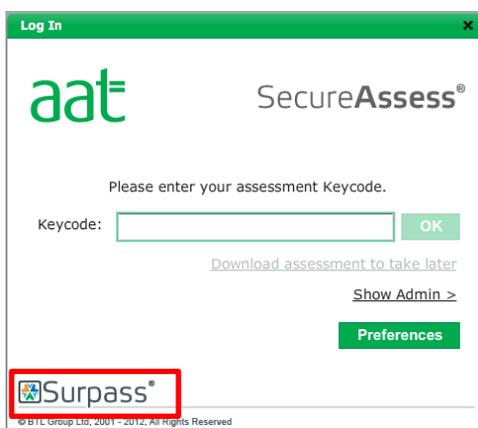
8.4 Screen issues

If the full screen is not visible – try the F11 key (usually on the top row of the keyboard) for full screen. Also, check zoom settings on the PC.

If the screen freezes, follow the steps below. DO NOT move the student to another PC as this can lead to a loss of or student responses.

> **Step 1**. First **pause** the student's assessment from the 'Invigilation' tab within **SecureAssess**.
>
> **Step 2**. Close the SecureClient on the student's PC. To do this, hold down Ctrl+Alt+Del to access the Task Manager. Click Task Manager then click on the Application tab. Select Surpass SecureClient and click End task.
>
> **Step 3**. Check the student's PC has internet connection.
>
> **Step 4**. Reopen SecureClient, re-enter the student's keycode then resume the assessment on the invigilation screen of **SecureAssess**. The assessment must not be resumed until the affected student is ready and composed from the disruption.

Inactive cells within the assessment page will sometimes respond if you click away from them and then click back in them.

8.5 Connection loss / user disconnected

If the connection to the server fails during an assessment for any reason, SecureClient will begin storing responses to the student's computer until the end of the assessment or until a connection has been re-established. All assessments will close automatically at the end of the allocated time or when a student clicks 'Submit Assessment' and confirms the submission details within the pop-up box. Once they have confirmed this there are three possible next steps:

> **Step 1**. If the student's computer has re-established an internet connection, then their responses and assessment will be automatically uploaded back to the **SecureAssess** system.
>
> **Step 2**. If the student's computer still has no internet connection at the point of submission, a pop-up will be displayed informing them that their assessment has not been uploaded. If this pop-up is left open and connection is restored, then the assessment will upload / submit.
>
> **Step 3**. If the connection is not restored, open SecureClient when an internet connection is available; the script will automatically upload. The 'Show Admin' login should be accessed to ensure the script has uploaded or to help push it through.

It is important that you re-establish connection and submit the student's completed assessment. The assessment should be showing with a finished state (✔) on the Invigilation screen, which confirms AAT has received the student's assessment. If the Awaiting Upload symbol (🔺) is displayed, then immediate action must be taken to complete step 3 listed above.

8.6 Authenticated proxies

If you receive an error message regarding a failure to validate a keycode, this may be due to the use of an authenticated proxy on your network. A SecureClient version which works with authenticated proxies can **be downloaded** from the link contained in the *SecureClient Installation and Testing guide* on the **CBA support page**.

Please ensure you run practice assessments before any live session following a SecureAssess update.

8.7 Downloading assessment materials from SecureClient

For assessments that require the use of third-party software, the *Assessment book* comes in one of two formats: .pdf (Adobe) and .xlsx (Excel). When downloading assessment materials from the assessment, students are required to save the document before they can access it.

If there is an error message that prevents the student from accessing the downloaded assessment material, it could be caused by the internet or third-party software settings on the computer(s) being used to take the assessment. If this happens during an assessment, the Invigilator or CBA Technical Contact must carry out the following checks on each affected computer:

1. Open the internet browser (for example, Internet Explorer).
2. From the toolbar select the Tools option and click on Internet Options within the dropdown menu. If you are using Internet Explorer, a new window will open.
3. Select the Advanced tab and then scroll down the list until you can see the heading 'Security'.
4. If the option 'Do not save encrypted pages to disk' is ticked, you have successfully located the source of the file access problem. Un-tick this option and close the file that the student had been attempting to access.
5. Students should now download the document again.

8.8 Uploading assessment documents to SecureClient

Students must save and close their assessment evidence before they attempt to upload them to SecureClient. Open files cannot be uploaded.

Students can easily check to ensure they have uploaded their work successfully by clicking the 'Upload files' link again.

Here they can view what has been uploaded to the task. They can also rename, replace or delete uploaded files.

If a student is unable to upload their evidence to the assessment, they will receive an error message. These can be found in the relevant *student guidance document*. The following basic checks must be carried out based on the error message:

- **check the file size** – each file must be no larger than 10MB
- **check the file name** – additional files cannot be uploaded if a file containing a special character in the name has already been uploaded, for example, ? @ $ &
- **check the file name** – if two files have the same name, only one can be uploaded. All files must be named differently
- **check the file location** – files must be saved in an easily accessible location, i.e. the desktop. If files are saved in a specific folder, ensure that there are no access restrictions on it that prevent SecureClient from accessing the location

- **check the file** – open files cannot be uploaded. Ensure that files are saved and closed before they are uploaded.

If you are faced by a problem that is not resolved by any of these tips, please contact Customer Support on **+44 (0)20 3735 2443**.

Appendix 1: Invigilator's instructions and announcement for computer based assessments (CBAs)

As an Invigilator, you must be aware of the general instructions for the conduct of assessments and the pre-assessment checks that are detailed throughout this document.

The following Invigilator announcement must be read out before the start of the takes place. Please allow approximately 10 minutes to read this out, prior to the start of the assessment.

Any information in *italic* is specific to certain assessments. Please advise the students to listen carefully to the following instructions:

All students have been provided with a keycode to open the assessment.

After entering the keycode, you must check and confirm that your details on screen are correct and accept the Terms and Conditions before you can start the assessment.

Once you enter the assessment, you must:

- read all instructions carefully on the introduction page and throughout the assessment
- note the duration of the assessment, stated on the introduction page
- manage your time during the assessment.

Your assessment timer will not start until you click 'Start Assessment' on the Introduction page.

Before the start of the assessment, you may request the following, where applicable, from the Invigilator:

- blank paper
- *a printed copy of the Assessment book (for AASW and UACS assessments only)*
- *student guidance document (only for assessments that require the use of third-party software and uploads).*

Any blank paper, *Assessment books* or *student guidance document* material that is distributed before or during the assessment **must not** be taken out of the assessment room. The Invigilator will collect these materials after you finish your assessment and before you leave the assessment room.

Any permitted equipment, such as pens, pencils, erasers and calculators must be stored in a transparent pencil case or placed on your desk. These must be checked and approved by Assessment Centre staff prior to the start of the assessment.

You are permitted to use a scientific calculator. However, calculators **must not** be used if they:

- emit audible tones
- can print
- allow text, dictionaries or mathematical formulas to be stored and retrieved
- can communicate with other devices or the internet
- are functions of a personal organiser, watch or mobile phone.

The following items are **not** permitted:

- mobile phones
- dictionaries
- computers other than those being used for the assessment

- memory sticks
- study text, revision cards, course notes
- books and papers
- any other form of digital, electronic, recording or programmable equipment, including, but not limited to tablets, Dictaphones, cameras, smart watches.

Talking is **not** allowed inside the assessment room. (**CBA Administrators / Invigilators** must add in here any other restrictions in accordance with their centre policies, such as those applying to smoking, eating and drinking, especially where these have a bearing on the security of the assessment, may disrupt students, or may advantage or disadvantage students).

You can view how much time you have remaining via the assessment clock within SecureClient. The clock shows on every task page and must be used to help you manage your time during the assessment.

The Invigilator will notify you when there are 15 minutes and 5 minutes of the assessment remaining, based on the point at which the assessment is unlocked.

All students **must** manage their own time and not solely rely on the Invigilator's announcement.

If you require the attention of the Invigilator at any time you must raise your hand.

If you need to leave the room during the assessment, you will only be allowed to do so under supervision. When leaving the room, you must do so in an orderly and quiet manner so as not to disturb other candidates.

If you experience any technical or non-technical issues during your assessment that disrupt you, you must notify the Invigilator immediately. This will allow the Invigilator to resolve any issues or request additional assistance.

Students are not allowed to print, make copies of, or store the assessment or any of its content onto the PC or any other device, unless this has been specifically stated in the requirements of the assessment.

During the assessment, you must not obtain, or try to obtain, help from another student. You must not help or attempt to help another student. If you need help, please raise your hand to speak to the Invigilator.

Any student caught with notes or books, copying from or talking to other students, using banned electronic devices, cheating in any way, or committing any act that is considered malpractice will be immediately removed from the assessment room and reported to AAT. All reported cases will be treated and investigated as malpractice and can result in sanctions or penalties, such as making results null and void, and banning students from taking other assessments for a specific period of time.

If you believe you have witnessed any malpractice by another student then you are required to report this, in confidence, to an Invigilator immediately who will investigate and report to AAT.

(**Invigilators** – *for any students taking assessments that require the use of third–party software, ensure that the relevant additional announcements are read out; see next page*)

I will now switch the assessment to live **or** you may now enter this PIN.

You may begin as soon as the assessment is on screen.

Additional announcement for assessments that require the use of third-party software (AASW, AVSY and UACS):

If you are taking an assessment that requires the use of third-party software, you will be provided with an electronic Assessment book for each task, containing the full instructions for the task. To navigate between SecureClient, the Assessment book and third-party software, use the taskbar or your desktop. To access the desktop, click on the minimise symbol in the top right corner of SecureClient.

You are strongly advised to regularly save your work within the software being used to minimise the chance of any data loss in the event of a technical issue with your PC.

You will receive onscreen notifications of the time remaining, within SecureClient. These will start at 30 minutes before the end of the assessment.

You are responsible for uploading all your evidence to the correct task. You can check any work that has been uploaded to the task at any stage by clicking on the 'Upload files' button on the task page.

You must not leave the assessment without having uploaded the correct file(s) before submitting the assessment. If you fail to upload your work, you are likely to receive a not yet competent result.

Where a file cannot be uploaded, an Upload Failed message will appear on screen giving a description of the issue. If you are unable to resolve this issue or if you experience a technical issue preventing you from uploading your file, notify the Invigilator immediately.

If the Invigilator is unable to resolve the issue, they will complete an incident report and submit it, with your evidence, to AAT. AAT will accept work outside of the assessment platform at their discretion.

Additional announcement for the Advanced Diploma synoptic (AVSY) assessment only

*The total time available to take the Advanced Diploma synoptic (AVSY) assessment is **three hours.***

The assessment consists of two Parts. Each part has a separate time allocation. You have:

- *__75 minutes (one hour and 15 minutes)__ for Part 1; and*
- *__105 minutes (one hour and 45 minutes)__ for Part 2. This includes **15 minutes** to upload your evidence.*

You must complete Part 1 before you can move to Part 2.

*To move from Part 1 to Part 2, click 'Next'. **Do not click 'Submit assessment' to move to Part 2.***

If you use up all of your time in Part 1, you will automatically be presented with Part 2 of the assessment.

You will receive a notification when you move from Part 1, which will require you to confirm that:

- *any unused time from Part 1 will **NOT** be carried over to Part 2*
- *you **CANNOT** return to Part 1 once you move to Part 2.*

*As soon as you are presented with Part 2, the allocated time for this part of the assessment will start. You **must** upload all your evidence for the assessment within the allocated time.*

In Part 2 of the assessment you will be required to make use of spreadsheet software. Each task in Part 2 requires evidence to be uploaded.

You will receive onscreen notifications of the time remaining in each Part. In Part 1, this will be within SecureClient. In Part 2, this will be from the taskbar and within SecureClient. These will start at 30 minutes before the end of each Part.

The centre is not authorised to print any assessment material for this assessment.

Appendix 2: Guidance on the use of third-party software

Students must have access to relevant third-party software when taking the following assessments:

- **Access to Accounting Software (AASW)** – part of the Access to Accounting Software (Level 1) qualification
- **Using Accounting Software (UACS)** – part of the Foundation Certificate in Accounting (Level 2) / Diploma in Accounting and Business (Level 2) / Foundation Award in Accounting Software (Level 2) qualifications
- **Advanced synoptic (AVSY) assessment** – part of the Advanced Diploma in Accounting (Level 3) / AAT Assistant Accountant End Point Assessment (Level 3) qualifications.

The software provided for these assessments must allow students to provide relevant evidence that can be uploaded and assessed against specific learning outcomes within the unit specifications. To help you identify the most appropriate software, please refer to the unit specifications and / or read the following information.

For **Access to Accounting Software (AASW)**, students are required to:

- set up general ledger accounts and record bank and cash transactions from a variety of documents, including bank statements
- recognise potential risks to accounting software security and know how to protect accounting software against threats
- use accounting software to produce a variety of reports for a business, such as a trial balance and an audit trail
- explore the differences between cloud accounting software and traditional accounting software.

For **Using Accounting Software (UACS)**, students are required to:

- enter accounting transactions into accounting software and to perform bank reconciliations accurately
- enter information into accounting software and understand the main features of accounting software
- set up general ledger accounts for new and existing businesses and process the typical bookkeeping entries expected of students at this level, including the processing of sales and purchase documentation, recording bank and cash entries and carrying out bank reconciliations accurately
- produce reports using the software and understand the purpose of these reports.

Spreadsheet software alone will **not** allow full unit content coverage, so cannot be used for the AASW and UACS assessment.

The software for both AASW and UACS assessments must be capable of producing reports in at least one of the following formats at various stages of the process: .xlsx, .csv, .doc, .docx, .pdf, .bmp, .gif, .jpg, and .png. **Assessment evidence submitted in alternative file formats will not be marked.** In addition, candidates should be able to respond to computer-generated error messages, making use of these as required, and must be able to save screenshots to provide evidence of their work. Screenshots must be saved in one of the file formats listed above.

Students will be required to set up the accounting software with relevant contextual details (such as company name, VAT number and VAT rate), before the assessment commences. Instructions for this will be given in the *Assessment book. For cloud-based software, the Assessment Centre should still log in on behalf of the student, but the student must enter the contextual details.*

There are a variety of accounting software packages available; we do not prescribe which ones can be used. However, the software will need to be familiar to students and so we strongly recommend

that the software provided for the assessment is the same as that used by students during their study programme. Assessment Venues should make it clear to prospective candidates, which software package(s) they provide, so that candidates can make an informed decision about which Assessment Venue they use to sit their assessment. Training Providers offering distance learning courses should assist students in finding a suitable Assessment Venue that has the relevant software.

For the **Advanced Synoptic (AVSY) assessment**, students are required to:

- prepare accounting records and respond to errors, omissions and other concerns, in accordance with accounting and ethical principles and relevant regulations
- use relevant spreadsheet skills to analyse, interpret and report management accounting data
- prepare financial accounting information, comprising extended trial balances and final accounts for sole traders and partnerships, using spreadsheets.

Whilst students taking AVSY do not need access to specialised accounting software, they do need access to spreadsheet software, such as Excel. The software they use must allow students to save and upload documents in .xlsx format, which is the format currently supported by Microsoft.