DSA Equipment specification guidance February 2012

This form supersedes any previously released versions

Remit

- To review and update, as necessary, the specifications set in October 2011
- To address any issues raised by stakeholders

Agreed changes to computer specifications

- The minimum speed of all notebook i3 and i5 processors was increased by 0.1GHz to conform with currently available commercial products.

Agreed changes to other equipment specifications

- Under 1.5 Printer / Scanner, the DSA-QAG quotation request document has an entry for 'Paper (starter pack)' to be quoted for. It was reported that there appears to be inconsistency in the interpretation of this item by suppliers. It was proposed that when paper is requested in this context, the supplier must quote for one ream of A4 80g paper. This will be raised with DSA-QAG at the 06/03/12 Associates Meeting.
- Unlike the DM series Olympus recorders, the LS-20 recorder does not come with Olympus Sonority Software. This limits the usefulness of the recorder. It was agreed that this software should become part of the 'bundle' along with the 32GB SD card and GorillaPod tripod.

Issues discussed which did not result in changes

- There was deemed no financial case for the reintroduction of the LAS / Scribe laptop specification or the introduction of LAS / Scribe desktop. The appropriateness of reintroducing the LAS / Scribe specification will always be considered at each future review.
- The next major change in processor technology and the introduction of Windows 8 is likely to happen in July / August 2012, so it is proposed the next specification meeting takes place around this time.
- The suggestion that the Creative / CAD specification should be increased to from i5 to i7 was not agreed. It was agreed that the current graphics standards were adequate for most applications. This would, of course, be reviewed at the next meeting.
- No changes to the Netbook specification were deemed necessary and it was noted to be a very uncommon recommendation.
- The suggestion that the 'standard' desktop PC monitor should be the 22 inch rather than the 19 inch was not agreed. Assessors should make a disability related justification for a monitor larger than 19 inches.
- The suggestion that a keyboard wrist rest be included in the 'standard' desktop and notebook accessory package was rejected. Assessors should make a justification for a wrist rest if they recommend one.
- The suggestion that external speakers or headphones be included in the notebook accessory pack was rejected. Assessors should make a justification for either of both of these items, if they make a recommendation.

- The suggestion that the Olympus LS-20 pack should come as standard with a spare battery and charger was not agreed. It will be available as a separate item.
- The supply of CD media with software was discussed as there appears to be a state of confusion among suppliers. To clarify.
- Products and deals offered by Microsoft to students will change on 01/04/12. Pricing details are not yet available but there may be an increase which SFE need to be aware of. The new Office product for DSA students will be called Office University 2010.

Points to note

- When using the DSA-QAG quotation request document, assessors must specify the make and model of equipment. While this issue appears to have improved with respect to printers and scanners, supplier's reported that too many assessors are asking for 'a digital recorder' or 'an Olympus digital recorder'. The group agreed that assessors and Centre Managers should be reminded that the make and model of the digital recorder MUST be specified to ensure a like-for-like quotation.
- When a student chooses to upgrade from the quoted computer specification to a specification of their choice, many suppliers have been told by their local VAT offices that VAT must be charged on the difference in the computer price. This is because this part of the purchase is deemed not to be disability related.
- Some suppliers are not charging VAT on rental computers. The legitimacy of this is being questioned by other suppliers, but it also disadvantages students who wish to upgrade to a purchase as the rental price will be lower, making the difference in price greater.
- SFE require that all suppliers are explicit about the items supplied with the rental. E.g. list the 'items to be supplied as standard with a notebook' in the rental description.
- On-site versus remote one-to-one training was discussed. Up until now there has not been a need for the training to specify onsite or remote. Assessors should now be specific. It was agreed that remote training prices should not provided when the Assessor has requested onsite training.
- Autodesk products (e.g. AutoCAD) are available as Free, Student or Commercial products. There is no support available for the free version.
- Impending new legal and medical options for Dragon from Spellex were mentioned.
- It is difficult and costly for suppliers to deal with the purchase of Apps on behalf of students. It was suggested that in cases where 'Apps' of low value were recommended for students, that they should be reimbursable from the General Allowance in the same way as ink and books.

Antivirus

Suppliers have been active in this area and have proposed some changes to their QAF. In the meantime there was agreement that Microsoft Security Essentials would fit the definition of a licensed product, even though it is free.

Background

This was the third meeting of the joint Assessment Centre / Assessor / Supplier group for setting DSA computer specifications.

- This group comprised: Suppliers (x3) – Antony Ruck (Barry Bennett), Jonathan Rouse (Microlink), Ted Pratt (MKC); NNAC (x2) – Daniel Parrott & Jane Dudley; IAC (x1) – Paul Dilley; ASASA (x1) – Graham Rice (substituting for Arnold Maiden)

Next meeting July / August 2012.

22/02/12 FINAL