Word Processor Policy (2025-2026)

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Word Processor Use Policy

This policy is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance on access arrangements and instructions for conducting exams.

References in this policy to AA and ICE relate to/are directly taken from the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025-2026 and Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2025-2026 publications.

Introduction

The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement.

(AA 4.2.1)

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

A centre must make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they cannot make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

(AA 4.2.2)

Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

(AA 4.2.3)

Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate.SENCos must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.7)

The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination. This is particularly so where a computer reader, modified enlarged papers, a scribe, speech recognition technology or a word processor will be used in examinations.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Grey Court School complies with AA (chapter 4) Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties, (section 5.8) Word processor and ICE (sections 14.20-25) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in examinations.

The term 'word processor' is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet.

The use of a word process

The centre will

- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text **disabled (switched off)** where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.8.1)
- award the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs
  Needs may include
  - a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to write legibly
  - a medical condition
  - a physical disability
  - a sensory impairment
  - planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
  - poor handwriting (AA 5.8.4)
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AA 4.2.1)
- not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification (AA 4.2.3)
- consider the needs of the candidate at the start of the candidate's course leading to a qualification based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the candidate's needs and 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests/exams, mock exams etc. and confirm arrangements in place before the candidate takes an exam or assessment (AA 4.2.4)
- provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)

The centre will not

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home (AA 5.8.4)

Exceptions

The only exceptions to the above where the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate would be

- in the event of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course (AA 4.2.4)
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates (AA 5.8.4)
- Where it has been agreed by the SENCo in gathering feedback from teaching staff, that the students handwriting is consistently illegible for over a 12 month period and therefore putting them at an unfair disadvantage compared to their peers.

Arrangements at the time of the assessment for the use of a word processor

A candidate using a word processor will be seated for their exams in computer suites within the school.

In compliance with the regulations the centre

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20)

- Where a laptop is provided checks the battery capacity of the word processor before the candidate's exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the exam (ICE 14.21)
- ensures the candidate is reminded to ensure that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer e.g. 12345/8001 – 6391/01 (ICE 14.22)

  If a candidate is using the software application Notepad or Wordpad these do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer. In such circumstances once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off their typed script, they are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way.
- ensures the candidate understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23)
- ensures the candidate is reminded to save their work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet)
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to make marking easier for examiners (ICE 14.24)

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure the word processor:

- is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- is not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable and is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is cleared of any previously stored data
- does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc.
- does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these
- does not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

Portable storage medium

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used

- is provided by the centre
- is cleared of any previously stored data

Printing the script after the exam is over

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure

- the word processor is either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is his or their own
- a word processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- where an awarding body requires a cover sheet to be completed this is included with the candidate's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions).

Who may use a Word Processor in school?

The following conditions must be met before permission will be given for a pupil to use a Word Processor in school:

- A specific recommendation has been received from either
  - An educational psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist or Specialist teacher or
  - The school's SENCo while the pupil is waiting for the educational psychologist's report.
  - Where it has been agreed by the SENCo in gathering feedback from teaching staff that the students handwriting is illegible and therefore putting them at a disadvantage compared to their peers.
- Touch-typing speed must at least match handwriting speed.

How and when is a Word Processor used?

In class:

• Word Processor use is allowed with the agreement of the subject department head and the teacher.

• Pupils must ensure that Word Processors are charged every evening.

• Word Processors must be capable of being run on battery, and that battery power should always be used.

• Word Processors must be on mute at all times.

• Any integrated recording devices must be disabled at all times.

• Pupils will not be allowed to use any unauthorised software or access the internet

Homework

• Written homework tasks must be printed at home and, where appropriate, stuck into an exercise book.

• Pupils may email homework to teachers only with the express permission of that teacher.

Teachers will:

• Physically accommodate Word Processor use in the classroom.

• Undertake training provided by the school to understand the impact of Word Processor use on their planning and lessons and on the pupil.

• Take responsibility for guiding the pupil and preparing appropriate resources.

In exams

• Pupils may use school Word Processors for internal exams and for external entrance exams only where permission has been received from the Headteacher or Examinations Officer

- Spell and grammar checks and predictive tools will be disabled.
- Word Processor users must be seated with screens visible to the invigilator and not to each other.
- Work will be printed out on school printers as soon as each exam ends.

Parents

Parents will be asked to be responsible for organising any extra support required to ensure the pupil has adequate touch-typing and operational skills.