

WORD PROCESSING POLICY FOR EXAMINATIONS for 2025/26

This Policy is reviewed and updated annually to comply with current regulations.

Introduction

The use of word processors in examinations and assessments is an available access arrangement.

This policy is on the use of word processors in examination, assessments and tests and student normal practice. The policy is edited using the most recent publication of JCQ's regulations and guidance which is contained in the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) for conducting examinations. All schools must comply with these regulations. References from this policy are taken directly from the AARA 2024 -25 and Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE).

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how school manages and administers the use of word processors including laptops and tablets in examinations, assessments, tests and pupil's normal practice in examinations. School will allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AARA 5.8.1) and award the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs.

The use of a word processor with grammar and spell check switched off is a school delegated access arrangement. All schools must have a policy on the use of word processors, and a member of the school's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the school uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. An awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet to be completed. (AARA 5.8.4)

This policy details how school complies with AARA Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.8-word processor, when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in his/her exams.

WORD PROCESSING IN EXAMINATIONS

(AARA 4.2.1)

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment 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 due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

(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. SENCo must consider the need for access arrangements on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AARA 5.8.4)

An awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet to be completed. CCEA still requires Form 4 to be completed, even though this form is not available on the JCQ website anymore.

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 4.2.4)

The use of a word processor is considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course. This means that any pupil using a word processor for exams should have this arrangement agreed by the end of year 11 at the latest (apart from exceptional circumstances). Access arrangements are based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the candidates' needs and 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests, exams, mock exams etc. and confirmed arrangements are in place before the candidate takes an exam or assessment.

(AA 5.8.4)

A centre must have a policy on the use of word processors. School will not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

(AA 4.2.5)

The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it appropriate to their needs and reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:

- in the classroom

- in the test hall
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing
- literacy support lessons
- literacy intervention strategies
- in internal school test and mock examinations
- mock examinations

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 access arrangements should be applied for as soon as is practicable.

(AARA 4.2.4)

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

A candidate using a word processor is normally accommodated in a different room with other word processor candidates or in the main room when it will not cause disruption to other candidates.

THE USE OF A WORD PROCESSOR

School complies with AA chapter 5 Access arrangements as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) where it is their normal way of working
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs (for example the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand)

The above could also extend to the use of electronic brailers and tablets in order to remove barriers which place a disabled candidate at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components (including controlled assessments or coursework) as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification

(AA 5.8.3)

- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions i.e. those requiring extended writing, and to hand-write shorter answers

- Is also aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to hand-write within the answer booklet. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen.

(AARA 5.8.4)

- An awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet to be completed and included with each candidate's typed script
- Ensures that in Functional Skills English (Reading and Writing components) the use of a word processor with the spell check facility switched on is permitted for all candidates
- Does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home

(AARA 5.5.5)

For all candidates, the evidence required is a short concise file note written by the SENCo on centre-headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the use of a computer reader and/or a reader reflects his/her normal and current way of working within the centre. A computer reader/reader may be awarded on account of: cognition and learning needs; communication and interaction needs; a medical condition; sensory and physical needs; social, mental and emotional needs.

WORD PROCESSORS AND THEIR PROGRAMS

School complies with ICE pg. 33 – word processors instructions by ensuring:

- Word processors are used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- Word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must be any portable storage medium used
- An unauthorised memory stick is not permitted for use by a candidate
- Where required, candidates are provided with a memory stick, which has been cleared of any previously stored data, by a nominated member of centre staff
- Word processors are in good working order at the time of the examination
- Word processors are accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen

- Where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated separately, a separate invigilator is used
- Word processors are either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium

- Documents are printed after the examination is over
- Candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own
- Word processed scripts are inserted in any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- Word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions. If they are not, the centre is aware that they may be refused by the awarding body
- Word processors are not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- Word processors are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- Candidates are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc. when using a word processor
- Graphic packages or computer-aided design software are not included on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these
- Predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is disabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a completed scribe cover sheet included), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- Voice recognition technology is not included on word processors unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- Word processors are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

Laptops and tablets

School further complies with ICE pg. 33 instructions by ensuring:

- tablets used during examinations/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'free-standing'
- the battery capacity of all laptops and/or tablets is checked before the candidate's examination(s) with the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination
- candidates with fully charged laptops or tablets are given the opportunity to be seated within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points
- candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer
- candidates using Notepad or Wordpad software (which do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer) are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished the examination and printed off their typed script;
candidates are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task

and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way

- candidates are instructed to appropriately number each page
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals
- where it is possible 'autosave' is set up on each laptop/tablet

- candidates are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed is their own.

ACCOMMODATING WORD PROCESSORS IN EXAMINATIONS

Candidates using word processors are internally accommodated in the following manner: separate examination room; separate invigilation by specially trained invigilators; candidates can use their own keyboard; adherence to JCQ ICE 14.20 – 14.27 as above.

Portable storage medium

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

Candidates using word processors (including laptops or tablets) are internally accommodated in the following manner:

- Where possible students using word processors will be housed in the main exam hall at the rear of the room so they cannot be overlooked by other candidates.
- If this is not possible then they will be housed together in a smaller room within school

Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors include the following:

- When housed within the main exam hall invigilators will be made aware of students using word processors and will be informed of the processes involved. ICT Technicians will be available to assist at the end of the exam to ensure scripts are printed off correctly with students still present to handover to the Lead Invigilator to send off to the exam board with the rest of the cohorts completed papers
- When housed in a separate exam room from the main cohort the invigilator will be informed of the processes involved. ICT Technicians will be available to assist at the end of the exam to ensure scripts are printed off correctly with students still present to handover to the Lead Invigilator to send off to the exam board with the rest of the cohorts completed papers

Other arrangements relating to the use of word processors include:

- If the Awarding body requires, a cover sheet will be handed over to the invigilator at the beginning of each exam for each student using a word processor

Printing the script after the exam is over

School 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 her own
- a word-processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- a word processor cover sheet, if required by the Awarding Body, is completed and included with the candidate's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions)