

# Word processor policy



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## Key staff involved in awarding and allocating word processors for exams

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Cath Nicholls
Exams officer	Susan Green
SLT member(s)	Gary Sills

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## **Introduction**

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for conducting examinations.

References to 'AA' relate to JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* and ICE to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations*.

## **Purpose of the policy**

This policy details how the centre manages and administers the use of word processors (including laptops and tablets) in examinations and assessments.

## **Principles for using a word processor**

Ash Manor School complies with AA chapter 4 *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* regulations and guidance as follows:

### **(AA 4.2.1)**

- Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties
- The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate
- SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage a candidate.

### **(AA 4.2.2)**

- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question

### **(AA 4.2.3)**

- Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis

### **(AA 4.2.4)**

- The use of a word processor is normally considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course providing the centre has firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working for a candidate
- Candidates are made aware when they will have the use of a word processor for timetabled examinations and non-examination assessments

(AA 4.2.5)

- The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:
  - in the classroom (where appropriate); or
  - working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
  - literacy support lessons; or
  - literacy intervention strategies; and/or
  - in internal school tests/examinations
  - mock examinations

The only exceptions to the above would be 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 4.2.7)

- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination.

### **The use of a word processor**

Ash Manor School complies with AA chapter 5 *Access arrangements available* as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off)
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) within the centre
- 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 also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets)

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components 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 handwrite shorter answers
- Are also aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a 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 handwrite within the answer booklet.

The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen

(AA 5.8.4)

- In all cases, will confirm with the board ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script (according to the instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- 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

### **Word processors and their programmes**

Ash Manor School complies with ICE 8.8 *Word processors* instructions by ensuring:

- word processors are used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must 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/attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers (and according to instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions, and if they are not then 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 is 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**

Ash Manor School further complies with ICE 8.8 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 in Ash Manor**

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

- Candidates using word processors will, in the first place, be housed in the main hall in seat A10r or at the very back in J14, both of these seats have access to a power supply. Laptops are however fully charged to last the length of the exam so candidates can be seated anywhere within the main hall.
- Each word processor has a privacy screen covering that does not allow the laptop to be overlooked by other candidates.
- Candidates may also be seated in the designated access rooms. In the access rooms candidates are seated at the back of the room.

- The word processor has been cleaned of all software other than Word Pad.
- Each word processor will have its memory cleared down prior to an exam.
- Each laptop is checked prior to the exam and there is a checklist prior to each examination series to be signed off to confirm that the Word Processor functions as expected.

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

- The Lead Invigilator for each room will be provided with a list of Access Arrangements for that room. This list will identify candidates requiring Word Processors.
- At the end of each exam the Lead Invigilator will collect the scripts and the memory stick from WP candidates. The Lead Invigilator will place the memory stick in to the PC in the AA room and will print off the work to the printer in the AA room. This is to be done in the presence of the candidate.
- The Lead Invigilator will hand the print out to the student to confirm that all pages are present and that the work is their own.
- The candidate will be asked to complete a header and footer with their details on each page and the page number (1 of 2 for example) in the presence of the Examinations Officer. This is the only amendment the candidate may make.
- If required the candidate will complete the relevant Exam Board Word Processor cover sheet with Candidate Number, Candidate Name and whether any questions were answered in the answer booklet.
- The Exam Board WP cover sheet will be included with the candidate's script.
- The Exam Board WP cover sheet will have been partially completed by the Examinations Officer with the following details: Examination Series, Centre Number, Awarding Body, Specification Title, Specification Entry Code, and Unit/Component Code.
- The Lead Invigilator will hand the script and Cover form to the Exam Manager who will ask if there are any additional any comments to be added to the JCQ 4 form.

### The criteria Ash Manor uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

#### **Awarding word processors**

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be **awarded** the use of a word processor in exams where he/she has a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way of working and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates.

Exceptions might include where a candidate has, for example:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- a medical condition
- a physical disability
- a sensory impairment
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- poor handwriting
- A temporary injury that prevents handwriting on a temporary basis. This will need to be supported by a medical note.

#### **Allocating word processors**

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be **allocated** by the IT department in liaison with the SENCo and the exams officer. In exceptional circumstances where the number of appropriate word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session, the cohort will be split into two groups. One group will sit the exam earlier than or later than the published start time. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 2.11 of ICE.

If the candidate is originally seated in the hall the issuance of a Word Processor will not, in itself, impact any previously agreed seating arrangements.

Statement produced by: Rob Milner, Deputy Head Teacher    Statement date: 10/11/2020