

Word Processor Policy (Exams) 2021/22

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Paul Cotton	
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Key staff involved in awarding and allocating word processors for exams

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Introduction

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

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 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.

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

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

The Additional Learning Support lead/SENCO must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not disadvantage or advantage a candidate.

The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how King Edward VI School Lichfield complies with Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AA) Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres / Word processor and Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE) 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 processor

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
- award the use of a word processor to a candidate where appropriate to their needs
For example, a candidate with:
 - a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly or where speed of writing is impacted
 - a medical condition
 - a physical disability
 - a sensory impairment
 - planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
 - poor handwriting
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained
- not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification
- Process access arrangements/reasonable adjustments at the start of the course, or as soon as practicable having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working, ensuring arrangements are always approved before an examination or assessment

- provide the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification

The centre will not

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.

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
- where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

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

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated out of the main exam hall in a classroom or similar to allow access to power supply and printer.

In compliance with the regulations the centre:

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise
- (where a candidate is to be seated with the main cohort without the use of a power point) 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
- 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

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
- ensures the candidate is reminded to save their work at regular intervals
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to make marking easier for examiners

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

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

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)

The criteria King Edward VI School Lichfield 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 has an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

The use of word processors

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded/allocated the use of a word processor in exams where the candidate 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.

This may include where a candidate has, for example:

- They have a confirmed and evidenced medical condition or physical disability which significantly affects their ability to write.
- They have a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly and / or at speed.
- They have a sensory impairment (e.g. a visual impairment) which means the use of a word processor is recommended by a specialist service
- They write at a significantly slower speed and / or with significantly reduced legibility, as assessed by a qualified Access Arrangements Assessor within the school using a standardised test.
- The use of a word processor reflects their normal way of working within the school

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

- on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury at the time of the assessment
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

Arrangements for the use of word processors at the time of the assessment

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be provided 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 awarding body's published start time. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with ICE.