

Word processor policy (exams)

2024/25

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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| **Approved/reviewed by** | |
|  | |
| **Date of next review** |  |

Key staff involved in awarding and allocating word processors for exams

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| **Role** | **Name(s)** |
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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](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) and [Instructions for conducting examinations.](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations)

References to 'AA' relate to JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2024-2025* and ICE to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2024-2025*

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Castle Manor Academy complies with AA chapter 4 (Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres), section 5.8 (Word processor) and ICE (sections 14.20-27) 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.

Principles for using a word processor

Castle Manor Academy complies with AA section B *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* regulations and guidance as follows:

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.

* 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 (AA 4.2.1)
* 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
* The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)
* Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis by the SENCo (AA 4.2.3)
* The SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate (AA 4.2.1)
* The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination. (AA 4.2.7)
* 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

* 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.

The use of a word processor

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in a separate room to the other students.

In compliance with the regulations the centre will:

* Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text (switched off) unless an awarding body’s specification says otherwise
* Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see above) within the centre and that there is sufficient evidence to support this
* Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is 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
  + a medical condition
  + a physical disability
  + a sensory impairment
  + planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
  + poor handwriting
* Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification
* only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained
* 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
* 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

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

Additionally the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate

* 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 typically in a room separate the main examination hall where other students sitting the same examination are also using word processors as an examination arrangement.

In compliance with the regulations the centre:

* provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body’s specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20)
* (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 (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 to ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate’s work is not lost) (ICE14.24)
* instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing 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 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
* 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), email, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets
* 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 (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body’s specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
* does not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader
* does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed)
* is not used on the candidate’s behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed)

**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 has ended**

(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 their own
* a word processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
* if a candidate omits to insert the required header or footer, they are instructed to handwrite the 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 (ICE 14.22)

The centre will also ensure that where an awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet, this is included with the candidate’s typed script (and according to the relevant awarding body’s instructions). (ICE 14.26)

The centre may retain electronic copies or word processed scripts as the electronic copy of a word processed script may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost. However, the centre would need to demonstrate to the awarding body that the electronic file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body. (ICE 14.27)

Appendix 1

The criteria Castle Manor Academy uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations:

This criteria should be read in conjunction with:

* Unity School’s Partnership SEND Policy;
* Castle Manor Examinations Policy;
* Castle Manor Examinations Access Arrangements Policy.

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| 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 they have 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.  Needs 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 and is confirmed by a qualified Examinations Access Arrangements Assessor * a medical condition * a physical disability * a sensory impairment * planning and organisational problems when writing by hand which have been confirmed by a qualified Examinations Access Arrangements Assessor * poor handwriting which renders the effective reading and marking of the candidates work impossible   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   **To establish a ‘normal way of working’**  Students who have been identified through at least one of the reasons above as requiring the use of technology to support communication need to ensure that:   * Evidence of need via a medical professional, educational psychologist, EHCP or formal assessment has been provided; * The student has consistently made use of the word processor in subjects where this is supporting the evidenced need; * Evidence to support use is compiled by the SENDco and/or SEND Support Team and held by the Examinations Officer in the students’ secure file for inspection on request; * Should the student prefer to handwrite in a specific subject and no longer requires the use of the word processor, this will be noted as their ‘normal way of working’ and parents/carers and staff will be updated; * Castle Manor has a small bank of laptops available for student use where there is a recommendation that this provision is made. Students are responsible for checking out the laptops as needed and this record may be provided as evidence if needed.   **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 section 7 of ICE. |

Statement produced by: Jennifer Beatonstatement date: December 18th 2023