

WORD PROCESSOR POLICY
(For the use of Word Processors in Exams)

Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. They fall into two distinct categories with some being delegated to centres and others requiring prior JCQ^{CIC} Awarding Body approval.

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment, for example: readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way awarding bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Biddenham School fulfils *"its obligations in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements."* (JCQ 'General regulations for approved centres', 2023-24, Chapter 5.5) This document is further referred to in this policy as GR.

The policy is reviewed annually to ensure that arrangements are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication: *"Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties; Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments; General and Vocational qualifications."* (JCQ, AA, 2022). This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

How reasonable the adjustment is, will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, time frames or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

The use of Word Processors in Exams

An exam candidate may be approved to use a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

"Centres are allowed to provide 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." (JCQ AA, 2023, Chapter 5.8.1)

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.

Word processors cannot simply be granted 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.

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 where written work is illegible, incomprehensible or so slow that, even with extra time, they are unable to meet the demands of the assessment.

It is permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions i.e. those requiring extended writing, and hand write shorter answers. The need to use a word processor may be considered on a subject by subject basis as some examinations require more simplistic answers and are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. Conversely, other examinations require a significant amount of writing or place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers and these are where candidates will frequently need to type.

Allocating word processors

The centre will follow the guidance as set out in the 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' (JCQ ICE, 2022-23, Section 14) with regard to the use of word processors. This document is further referred to as ICE in this policy.

Appropriate exam-compliant (JCQ ICE, 2022, pp. 14.20) word processors will be allocated by the IT department in liaison with the SENDCo and the exams officer.

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

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated either in the main venue with the majority of the exam candidates, or on occasions could be accommodated in an alternative venue i.e. a classroom.

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.

The centre will ensure the word processor:

- 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 type-writer, 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 be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

To comply with ICE (2022, Chapter 14), the centre will:

- provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off)
- (where a candidate is to be seated with the main cohort without the use of a powerpoint) 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 – laptops are always plugged in and charging throughout exams
- ensures the candidate is reminded to ensure that his/her 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 his/her typed script, he/she must handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate must be supervised to ensure that he/she is 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 his/her work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet)
- instruct the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking

Arrangements 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
- that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used is provided by the centre and is cleared of any previously stored data
- the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is his or her own
- a word processed script is attached to the answer booklet regardless of whether any answers were written in it

References

JCQ, [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, 2023](#)

JCQ, [General regulations for approved centres](#), 2023-24

JCQ, [Instructions for conducting exams](#), 2023-24

Date of Next Review: **May 2025**