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Word Processor Policy (exams)

2024 – 2025

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current JCQ regulations.

Approved/reviewed by	
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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.

Purpose of the policy

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

Principles for centres

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

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 them 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.

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.

4.2.2 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

4.2.3 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. SENCos must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

4.2.4 Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course. Schools, for example, should be able to process applications at the start of or during the first year of a two-year GCSE course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working during Years 7 to 9. Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment.

4.2.5 The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre†, for example:

- in the classroom (where appropriate);
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- support lessons;
- intervention strategies;

- in internal tests/examinations;
- mock examinations.

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. For candidates with learning difficulties, this is typically the background information recorded within Part 1 of Form 8 by the SENCo or the assessor working within the centre.

†The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place due to a temporary injury or impairment

The use of a word processor

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

5.8.1 Centres are allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text switched off where it is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

For example, the candidate's quality of language significantly improves when using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand.

(This also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets.)

5.8.2 The use of word processors in non-examination assessment components will be considered standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

5.8.3 A candidate may use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers.

NB 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 as the candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and computer screen

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

AARA (1 September 2024 – to 31 August 2025) Published by JCQ

Word processors and their programmes

Gordano School complies with ICE 14.25 *Word processors* instructions by ensuring:

14.25

A word processor:

- a. must be used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;
- b. must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used. An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate.

When needed, the centre must provide a memory stick, which is cleared of any

previously stored data, to the candidate;

- c. must be in good working order at the time of the examination;
- d. must be 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 in another room, a separate invigilator will be required;
- e. must either be connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. This must be done after the examination is over. The candidate must be present to verify that the work printed is their own. Word processed scripts must be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers;
- f. must be used to produce work under secure conditions, otherwise the candidate's script may not be accepted;
- g. must not be used to perform skills which are being assessed;
- h. must not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), email, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets;
- i. must not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these;
- j. must 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;
- k. must not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader;
- l. must not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed);
- m. must not be 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).

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An awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet to be included with the candidate's typed script. Please refer to the relevant awarding body's instructions.

Instructions for Conducting Examinations (1 September 2024 – to 31 August 2025) Published by JCQ

Advice: Candidates should use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking.

A statement on the criteria Gordano School uses to allocate word processors.

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. Candidates are reminded of their responsibility to write clearly in all exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of 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 s/he has a firmly established need and 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

These awards will only be made with appropriate medical evidence in place or after centre handwriting test results confirm the candidates need.

Allocating word processors

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be allocated by the Exams officer in liaison with the SENCO.