



External Exams - Word Processor Policy 2025 2026

The key staff involved in awarding and allocating word processors for exams are:

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| • SENCO: | Mrs N Griffin |
| • Exams Officer: | Ms S Nanan |
| • IT Manager: | Mr R Cain |
| • Senior Team: | Mrs D Walker |

This policy is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of updated JCO regulations and guidance on access arrangements and instructions for conducting exams. References in this policy to AA and ICE relate to/are directly taken from the) [JCO - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) and [JCO - Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#) publications.

Introduction

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

- (AA 4.2.1): The purpose of an access arrangement 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.
- (AA 4.2.2): Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- (AA 4.2.3): Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. SENCOs should consider the need for access arrangements on a subject-by-subject basis.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how we comply with AA (chapter 4) "Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties" and (chapter 5.8) "Word processor" when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in their exams. 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 where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.8.1)
- award the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs. Needs may include:
 - 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 (AA 5.8.4)

- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AA 4.2.1)
- not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification (AA 4.2.3)
- consider the needs of the candidate at the start of the candidate's course leading to a qualification based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the candidate's needs and 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests/exams, mock exams etc. and confirm arrangements in place before the candidate takes an exam or assessment (AA 4.2.4)
- provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)

The centre will not

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home (AA 5.8.4)

Exceptions

The only exception 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 (AA 4.2.4)
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates (AA 5.8.4)

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

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in an appropriate manner within an exam venue. To comply with ICE 14, the centre:

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) (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 Word pad 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, they must handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate must be supervised 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).
- instruct the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking (ICE 14.24)

The centre will ensure the word processor (ICE 14.25):

- 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 to be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.
- The word processor must not contain any AI tool (ICE 14.25)

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 their own
- a word processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers

Appendix 1: The criteria used 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. There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded/allocated 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
- a medical condition
- a physical disability
- a sensory impairment
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- poor handwriting

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 section 7 of ICE.

Review & Update

This policy will be reviewed annually. It was last updated in March 2026

See below for:

Appendix 2: Access Arrangements - word processor checklist for exams officer and invigilator

Appendix 3: Access Arrangements - word processor checklist for candidate use

Appendix 2: Access Arrangements - word processor checklist for exams officer and invigilator

Exam date: AM/PM session Exam room:

Preparing for the exam		X or NA
Word processing in IT room to be used	Are arrangements in place to disable network and prohibited applications access?	
Standalone word processor(s) to be used	Have these been checked to ensure that they are in good working order?	
Spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text	Is this disabled (switched off)? If X, confirm candidate(s) has approval for the use of a scribe	
Power for standalone word process(s)	Are arrangements in place to ensure that these are fully charged for the duration of the exam? Is a power source available if required?	
Memory stick(s)	Has the memory stick(s) been cleared?	
Word processor/scribe cover sheet(s)	Have these been prepared?	
Printing to take place in the exam room after the exam has finished	Confirm the word processor(s) will be connected to a print facility and that there is a process for the candidate(s) to verify his/her work	
Printing to take place in after the exam	Confirm the invigilator is briefed to bring the candidate(s) and memory stick(s) to print and verify his/her work	
At the beginning of the exam		X Or NA
Exam question papers and materials for this exam room provided to the invigilator	Word processor cover sheet(s) provided Scribe cover sheet(s) provided where candidate(s) approved the use of a scribe (spellcheck enabled)	
Appropriate seating arrangements for word processor candidate(s) in place	Check to ensure seating of word processor candidate(s) will not disturb other candidates	
Switch on word processor(s) ready for candidate(s) use	Check to ensure other candidates will not be able to read the screen(s)	
Insert memory stick(s) ready for candidate(s) use	Open/instruct candidate to open a new document in (e.g. Wordpad) 'Save as'/instruct candidate to 'save as' (e.g. candidate number) to the memory stick	
Give instructions to word processor candidate(s)	Use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing Insert the centre number, your candidate number and the unit/component code of the exam paper in each page as a header or footer (if no header or footer facility, handwrite after printing) e.g. 12345/8001 – 6391/01 Number each page (or handwrite after printing) e.g. page 1 of 6 Regularly save your work If you wish to do so you may handwrite some of your answers in	

	the awarding body answer booklet	
	Raise your hand to immediately summon the invigilator if there is a technical fault or issue during the exam	
Starting the exam		X Or NA
Issue standard invigilator announcement and instructions	No additional instructions required at this point for word processor candidate(s)	
During the exam		X Or NA
Be vigilant of all candidates at all times	At regular intervals quietly remind word processor candidate(s) to save his/her work	
At the end of the exam		X Or NA
Issue the standard invigilator instructions	Remind word processor candidate(s) to finally save his/her work	
After the exam		X Or NA
Issue printing in exam room instructions to word processor candidate(s) and closely supervise throughout	<p>(e.g. Candidate 1 select Print then collect your work and verify by (insert your verification process) that the work printed is your own</p> <p>Check you have inserted the required information as a header or footer/Handwrite the required information as a header or footer;</p> <p>DO NOT READ OR AMEND YOUR WORK IN ANY WAY</p> <p>Insert your work into your answer booklet (<i>where this is required by the awarding body/where the answer booklet contains any handwritten answers) and hand to me</i></p> <p>Close the document, safely eject the memory stick and hand to me</p> <p><i>You may now leave the exam room</i></p>	
Issue instructions to word processor candidate(s) for printing elsewhere	Close your document, safely eject the memory stick and hand to me with your answer booklet	
Escort candidate(s) to printing area	Print out candidate's work from memory stick	
Instruct candidate(s)	<p>Verify by (insert your verification process) that the work printed is your own</p> <p>Check you have inserted the required information as a header or footer/Handwrite the required information as a header or footer</p>	
Dismiss candidate(s)	Insert candidate(s) script into the awarding body answer booklet (<i>where this is required by the awarding body/where the answer booklet contains any handwritten answers</i>)	

	<p>Complete the word processor cover sheet and include with the script according to the individual awarding body's instructions</p> <p>Where applicable (spellcheck enabled), also complete and include the scribe cover sheet</p>	
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Appendix 3: Access Arrangements - word processor checklist for candidate use

Candidate:
Name:
Date:

Candidate number:
Exam unit/component code:

Reminders
Complete your name, candidate number, today's date and the exam code above Listen carefully to the instructions issued to you by the invigilator
A new document is open for you in (e.g. Wordpad)/Open a new document in (e.g. Wordpad) This document is 'saved as' (e.g. your candidate number)/'Save as' (e.g. your candidate number) to the memory stick
Set the font in your document to a minimum of 12pt Set the spacing in your document to double line spacing
Insert a header or footer/(e.g. Wordpad) does not allow a header or footer to be inserted – the required header or footer information must be handwritten on your printed script after the exam
Insert in header or footer - centre number and candidate number e.g. 12345/8001 Insert in header or footer – unit or component code e.g. 6391/01
Insert in header or footer – page number e.g. page 1 of 6
Complete the front cover of the awarding body answer booklet
Save your work regularly during the exam/Autosave will also save your work at regular intervals Save your work finally at the end of the exam
When instructed send your script to the printer/When instructed accompany the invigilator to print your script

Sign below to verify the script printed is your own

DO NOT READ OR AMEND YOUR WORK IN ANY
WAY

Check the header or footer to confirm it contains all the required information listed above/Handwrite as a header or footer all the required information listed above

By signing below, I am verifying the script printed is my own and confirm that the required information that must be provided in the header or footer has been inserted

Candidate signature

ONCE SIGNED HAND THIS CHECKLIST TO THE INVIGILATOR OR THE EXAMS OFFICER

Review & Update

This policy will be reviewed annually. It was last updated in September 2025.