

Word Processor Policy

This policy is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of updated JCQ 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 Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022-2023 and Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2022-2023 publications.

Introduction

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

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 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.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

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 4.2.2)

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. (AA 4.2.3)

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Marshland High School complies 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 his/her 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 his/her 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 he/she prefers 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 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 (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)

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

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated within the main hall, away from other candidates, unless they have another access arrangement which awards them alternative accommodation.

In compliance with the regulations the centre

- Centres can provide a word processor (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet), with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled, to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates. This also includes an electronic braille or a tablet. (ICE 14.20)
- Tablets are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged. Their purpose is to be 'free-standing'. The battery capacity of a laptop or a tablet must be checked before the candidate's examination(s) and the centre must ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination. The use of a fully-charged laptop or tablet will allow centres to seat a candidate within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points. (ICE 14.21)

- Candidates must be 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 these instances, 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. (ICE 14.22)
- Each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23)
- Invigilators must remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals. Alternatively, an IT technician can set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet. This will ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost. In order to make marking easier for examiners, candidates should use a minimum font size of 12pt and double spacing (ICE 14.24)

(ICE 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 his or her own. Word processed scripts must be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers;
- f) must be used to produce scripts under secure conditions, otherwise they may be refused;
- g) must not be used to perform skills which are being assessed;
- h) must not be connected to an intranet or any other means of communication;
- i) must not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc; 31
- j) must not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these;
- k) must 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;

- l) must not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software;
- m) must not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

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.

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 her own
- a word processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with the candidate's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions)

The criteria Marshland High School 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 may have 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 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.

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.