



SURBITON

HIGH SCHOOL

Use of word processors in public exams

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Statement

We observe the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations.

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with a specific need, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.

Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g. laptop, computer) 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.

Policy

In line with JCQ Regulations, we provide a word processor for use in public exams if it is the pupil's normal way of working within the centre and is appropriate to the pupil's needs.

The "normal way of working within the centre" includes the use of a word processor in the classroom and, if applying from Year 11 upwards, also during internal and mock examinations. This condition does not apply in the case of sudden physical injury (e.g. broken wrist).

"Appropriate to the pupil's needs" means that provision of a word processor is necessary to avoid the candidate being placed at a substantial (rather than minor) disadvantage in the examination as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

The "needs" of a pupil that would therefore typically lead to her being considered for the use of a word processor include:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on her ability to write legibly
- A medical condition that impacts on her ability to write legibly
- A physical disability that impacts on her ability to write legibly
- A sensory impairment that impacts on her ability to write legibly



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- Persistent and significant planning and organisational problems when writing by hand that put her at a substantial disadvantage that is rectified by use of a word processor

A word processor cannot be granted to a pupil because:

- The pupil prefers to type rather than write
- The pupil can work faster on a keyboard
- The pupil uses a word processor at home

For external examinations, an application for a word processor must be with the Head of Learning Enrichment no later than 21 February of the year that the examination is to be taken. This allows for the provision of access arrangements from the perspective of timetabling, equipment, accommodation and staffing, and suitable training and practice for the pupil. This deadline does not apply when there is a temporary physical injury e.g. broken wrist.

When a pupil has been allocated a word processor for examinations, the Head of Learning Enrichment will advise the Examinations Department and subject teachers.

In line with JCQ regulations, the Centre is responsible for determining suitable access arrangements for pupils. Recommendations in privately commissioned reports will not automatically be accepted and the final decision is made by the Centre. In any case, any such recommendations must be received by the School before the 21 February deadline mentioned above.

To be accepted for the use of a word processor all candidates must meet the criteria outlined above.

Candidates who have been granted use of a word processor in examinations are provided with one in essay-based subjects



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Appendix

The following is the JCQ guidance for access arrangements for word processors quoted in full from 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments':

5.8 Word processor

There is not a requirement to process an application using Access arrangements online or to record the use of the arrangement. No evidence is needed to support the arrangement. (This also applies where a candidate is using a word processor on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury.)

5.8.1 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. (See the first example on page 7 and the examples on page 55).

For example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of 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 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.

N.B. 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 computer screen.

5.8.4 For the regulations on the use of word processors in written examinations, please see page 29 of the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations (commonly known as the JCQ 'ICE' booklet)

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>

In all cases a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) must be completed.



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It is strongly recommended that a centre has a policy on the use of word processors which it can articulate to parents/carers. Principally, that 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 word processor at home.

The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically, and the centre provides word processors to all candidates.

The centre may wish to set out the particular types of candidates which it considers would benefit from the use of a word processor. 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.

This list is not exhaustive.

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations.

Examples - Word processor

- A candidate who cannot write legibly because she has significant learning difficulties asks to use a word processor in her examinations. **It is her normal means of producing written work within the centre** because her teachers cannot read her writing. She is very proficient in using a word processor. The SENCo allows her to use a word processor in her examinations.
- A candidate does not have a learning difficulty but is a 'messy' writer. His handwriting is hard to decipher. He requests the use of a word processor. This is granted by the SENCo because **it reflects his normal way of working within the centre.**
- A candidate wishes to use a word processor since this is her normal way of working within the centre. However, the candidate additionally wishes to use the spelling and grammar check facility. Given that she does not meet the published criteria for a scribe, the candidate cannot use the spelling and grammar check facility. The SENCo allows her to use a word processor in line with the regulations as set out in the JCQ 'ICE' booklet.



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- A candidate taking a GCSE Computer Science paper wishes to use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility enabled. However, the paper is testing his ability to proof-read a document. The SENCo refuses the use of the spelling and grammar check facility. He uses the word processor with the spelling and grammar check disabled (switched off).
- A candidate who has significant learning difficulties has quite legible writing. However, he makes many omissions and cannot order his ideas correctly. His written scripts are legible but covered in crossings-out and omission marks. He requests a word processor and this is granted by the SENCo. The use of a word processor allows him to correct text, sequence his answers and **reflects his normal way of working within the centre.**
- A blind candidate asks to use a word processor in his examinations. He also requests the use of a screen reader to allow him to 'read' back and check the answers he has typed. These arrangements are permitted when using a word processor in his examinations. **However, if the candidate also wants to use predictive text and/or the spelling and grammar check facility he must meet the published criteria for a scribe, with an approved application in place.**

Examples - Word processor and 25% extra time

- A candidate has a below average free writing speed when handwriting and qualifies for 25% extra time. However, using a word processor is her **normal way of working within the centre.** When typing she can produce her written work effectively and at a speed equivalent to an average writing rate. She has no further learning difficulties. The SENCo awards the use of a word processor as it removes the barrier presented by her slow handwriting, and only awards 25% extra time when she writes by hand such as in GCSE Mathematics examinations.
- A candidate with significant learning difficulties has a below average speed of writing and below average scores in areas of cognitive processing and reading speed. As using a word processor is his **normal way of working within the centre** he has been able to improve his typing speed to match the equivalent average writing rate. However, he has **persistent and significant difficulties** in interpreting questions and formulating his typed answers. He is given 25% extra time, as well as the use of a word processor, as both arrangements are appropriate to his



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