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# **WORD PROCESSOR POLICY (EXAMS)**

## **2024-2025**

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This procedure is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Reviewed by the Examinations Officer and SENDCO/ALS LEAD

“The Governors of Greenbank High School are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at every opportunity and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment”

## Key staff involved in awarding and allocating word processors for exams

Role	Name(s)
SENDSCO/ALS Lead	<b>Mrs H. Howe</b>
Exams officer	<b>Mrs J. Blease</b>
SLT member(s)	<b>Ms D. Aspinall, Mrs A. Gent-Jones, Miss C. Cullen, Mrs S. Whittaker, Mr C. Pritchard.</b>
Head of Centre	<b>Ms D. Aspinall</b>
IT manager	<b>Mr S. Lloyd</b>

### Contents

Key staff involved in awarding and allocating word processors for exams	2
Introduction	2
Purpose of the policy	3
Principles for using a word processor	3
The use of a word processor	4
Word processors and their programmes	5
Laptops and tablets	6
Accommodating word processors in examinations	7
Appendix 1	8
The criteria Greenbank High School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations	8

## 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 (AA) (2024 -2025) and Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE) (2024-2025)

## Introduction

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

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.

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. SENDCos (or equivalent role) must consider the need for access arrangements on a subject-by-subject basis.

The SENCo (or equivalent role) must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination.

## Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Greenbank High School complies with AA (chapter 4) Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties, (section 5.8) Word processor and ICE (sections 14.20-25) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in examinations.

The term 'word processor' is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet.

## Principles for using a word processor

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

- ▶ Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties
- ▶ The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate
- ▶ The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question
- ▶ Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis

- ▶ The use of a word processor is normally considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course providing the centre has firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working for a candidate
- ▶ Candidates are made aware when they will have the use of a word processor for timetabled examinations and non-examination assessments
- ▶ The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:
  - ▶ in the classroom (where appropriate); or
  - ▶ working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
  - ▶ literacy support lessons; or
  - ▶ literacy intervention strategies; and/or
  - ▶ in internal school tests/examinations
  - ▶ mock examinations

The only exceptions to the above would be 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.

### **The use of a word processor**

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

- ▶ Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off)
- ▶ Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) within the centre
- ▶ Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs (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)  
(The above also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets)
- ▶ Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification
- ▶ Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers
- ▶ Are also aware that 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 screen.
- ▶ The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.
- ▶ In all cases, ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script (according to the instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- ▶ Does 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

## The use of a word processor

The centre will

- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text switched off 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
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (
  - not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question
  - consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification
  - 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
  - provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification

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 they use a laptop at home

### 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
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

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

A candidate using a word processor is allocated in a smaller setting.

In compliance with the regulations the centre

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text switched off unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise.
- (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.
- 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

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 their typed script, they are instructed to handwrite their details as a header

or footer. The candidate is supervised throughout this process 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
- 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)
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to make marking easier for examiners

The centre will ensure the word processor:

- is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- is not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- 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 typewriter, 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 (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 (a scribe cover sheet must be completed)
- is not 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)

### **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
- where an awarding body requires a cover sheet to be completed this is included with the candidate's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions)
- if a candidate omits to insert the required header or footer, they are instructed to handwrite the details as a header or footer; the candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way

### **Word processors and their programmes**

Greenbank High School complies with *Word processors* instructions by ensuring:

- ▶ word processors are used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable

- ▶ word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used
- ▶ an unauthorised memory stick is not permitted for use by a candidate
- ▶ where required, candidates are provided with a memory stick, which has been cleared of any previously stored data, by a nominated member of centre staff
- ▶ word processors are in good working order at the time of the examination
- ▶ word processors are 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 separately, a separate invigilator is used
- ▶ word processors are either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- ▶ documents are printed after the examination is over
- ▶ candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own
- ▶ word processed scripts are inserted in/attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers (and according to instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- ▶ word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions, and if they are not then the centre is aware that they may be refused by the awarding body
- ▶ word processors are not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- ▶ word processors are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
- ▶ candidates are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc when using a word processor
- ▶ graphic packages or computer aided design software is not included on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these
- ▶ predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is disabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a completed scribe cover sheet included), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- ▶ voice recognition technology is not included on word processors unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- ▶ word processors are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

## **Laptops and tablets**

Greenbank High School further complies with instructions by ensuring:

- ▶ tablets used during examinations/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'free-standing'
- ▶ the battery capacity of all laptops and/or tablets is checked before the candidate's examination(s) with the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination
- ▶ candidates with fully charged laptops or tablets are given the opportunity to be seated within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points
- ▶ candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer
- ▶ candidates using Notepad or WordPad software (which do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer) are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished the examination and printed off their typed script; candidates are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way
- ▶ candidates are instructed to appropriately number each page
- ▶ candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- ▶ invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals
- ▶ where it is possible 'autosave' is set up on each laptop/tablet

- ▶ candidates are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed is their own

### **Accommodating word processors in examinations**

Candidates using word processors (including laptops or tablets) are internally accommodated in the following manner:

- ▶ Candidates are seated in a separate room to the other candidates who do not require a word processor for their examinations.

Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors include the following:

- ▶ Separate Invigilation is provided.

Other arrangements relating to the use of word processors include:

- ▶ Candidates are required to be present at the time that their work is printed to confirm that it is their own work. This is then signed and dated by the candidate in the presence of the invigilator.
- ▶ The work completed by the candidate on the word processor is saved and stored on a removable USB stick and stored in the safe in the Exams Office.

## Appendix 1

### The criteria Greenbank High School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations

Use of a word processor in examinations is a centre-delegated arrangement. Principally, 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.

It is not a reasonable adjustment for a candidate to request use of a word processor because they can type faster than they can handwrite. The use of a word processor will be as a result of a well-established SEND need/illegible handwriting which has been identified and evidenced over time.

Permission to use a laptop/device in class should not be taken to imply permission to allow this arrangement in assessments / exams.

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.

### Awarding word processors

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

This list is not exhaustive. Each case will be considered on its merit and a decision will be made by the SENDCO/ALS Lead in consultation with SLT.

### Allocating word processors

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be **allocated** by the IT department in liaison with the SENDCO/ALS Lead and the exams officer. Forward planning will ensure that the centre has enough word processors available to accommodate the needs of individual candidates. Where more word processors are required, they will be purchased in advance of the examination series.