St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Examinations: Word Processor Policy

This policy is the responsibility of the Exams Officer/SENCo.

Last review: October 25

Next review: October 26

Introduction

References in this policy to AA and ICE relate to/are directly taken from the Access Arrangements and Special Considerations 2025-2026 and Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2025-2026 publications.

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

(AA 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 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.

(AA 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.

(AA 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 (or equivalent role) **must** consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.1)
The SENCo (or equivalent role) **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

(AA 4.2.7)
The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments(s) before their first examination.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how St Mary's School complies with AA chapter 4 (Managing the needs of candidates - principles for centres), section 5.8 (Word processor) and ICE (sections 14.20-27) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in their examinations.

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

The criteria St Mary's School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments

- A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because they want to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.
- The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's 'normal way of working within the centre' & will not hinder the candidate in completing the examinations & non-examination assessments at any time. St Mary's School defines 'normal way of working within the centre' in the following way:
    - The candidate must have used a laptop for at least 15 months prior to the public examination.
    - The candidate must use the laptop for the majority of their work in both class and homework in each subject to qualify for examination computer use.
    - Candidates who opt to use a word processor in public examinations are not required to do so in every subject. Candidates are advised to use a word processor only in appropriate subjects under the guidance and recommendation of subject teachers. For example, a candidate may apply only to do their public examinations in "written subjects" using a word processor and to do examinations by hand in those subjects which require specialist notation or have a greater numerical or diagrammatic component.
- If a candidate believes they should be using a word processor for their public examinations & non-examination assessments, they must first speak with the Head of Learning Support. The use of a word processor will only be granted to a student if it is appropriate to their needs and approved by the Head of Learning Support.
- If the Head of Learning Support agrees that a word processor is acceptable for a candidate to use in their public examinations & non-examination assessments, the Head of Learning Support will inform the Examinations Officer & subject leader staff by email.
- The Examinations Officer/Head of Learning Support will then add this entitlement to their iSAMS Exams profile, so it is recorded for public examination seasons. However, the candidate may or may not wish to use the word processor on the day of the examination.
- The subject leader must make sure that the word processor is ready if the candidate wants to use this for their non-examination assessments. However, the candidate may or may not wish to use the word processor on the day of the non-examination assessments. NB Word processors cannot be used in non-examination assessments if prohibited for that unit & or specification. If in doubt the subject leader should email the Examinations Officer who will then contact the relevant awarding body by email to ask permission for the use of a word processor in that non-examination assessment unit. The subject leader should contact the Examinations Officer at least 2 weeks before the non- examination assessment is due to take place.
- Where possible, students taking year group, in class and other tests and assessments will have the opportunity to use a laptop.
- Appropriate exam-compliant word processor log-ons will be allocated by the IT department in liaison with the exams officer and Head of Learning Support.

- During the year 11/13 mock exam series and the summer public exam series the ICT room will be used for the word-processed examinations.

Exceptions

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded/allocated the use of a word processor in exams where the candidate 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.

This may 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;
- the candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology;
- a medical condition;
- a physical disability;
- a sensory impairment;
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand;
- poor handwriting.

The centre will

- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check facility/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 where appropriate to their needs 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 (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)
- process access arrangements/reasonable adjustments at the start of the course, or as soon as practicable having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working, ensuring arrangements are always approved before an examination or assessment. (AA 4.2.4)
- provide the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)
- 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 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 centre will not

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home (AA 5.8.4)

Additionally, the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate

- 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 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 in the ICT room or one of the small rooms.

In compliance with the regulations the centre:

- provides a word processor; with the spelling and grammar check and predictive text switched off to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20)
- ensures tablets used during examinations/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'free-standing'
- checks the battery capacity of a laptop or tablet before the candidate's examination(s) and that the battery is sufficiently charged to last for the entire duration of the examination (ICE 14.21)
- will give the opportunity to candidates with fully charged laptops or tablets to be seated within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power sockets
- ensures that the candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit or component code must appear on each page as a header or footer, e.g., 22143/2001 – 8700/01.
- ensures that candidates are instructed to appropriately number each page, e.g., 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23)
- instructs the candidates to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing to make marking easier for examiners (ICE 14.24)
- ensures that invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals. Where it is possible 'autosave' is set up on each laptop or tablet to ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost (ICE 14.24)
- ensures that 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

St Mary's School will also ensure that 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 used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;
- has been cleared of any previously stored data;
- is in good working order at the time of the examination;
- is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen;
- is used to produce scripts under secure conditions, and if it is not then the centre is aware that they may be refused by the awarding body;
- does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), email, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets;
- 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 computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader;
- does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed);
- does not include AI tools
- 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 (ICE 14.25)

The Centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (eg. A memory stick) used:

- is provided by the Centre;
- is cleared of any previously stored data,

Printing the script after the exam has ended (ICE 14.25)

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;
- documents are printed after the examination is over;
- candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own;
- a word-processed script is inserted in/attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers (and according to instructions issued by the individual awarding body);
- 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 the task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way (ICE 14.22).

The centre will also ensure that where an awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet, this is included with the candidate's typed script (and according to the relevant awarding body's instructions). (ICE 14.26)

The centre may retain electronic copies of word-processed scripts as the electronic copy of a word- processed script may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost. However, the centre would need to demonstrate to the awarding body that the electronic file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body. (ICE 14.27)

Centre specific processes

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

- All WP students are accommodated in the ICT room unless the candidate has access arrangements in place to work in a separate room. In these circumstances the candidate will be provided with a laptop and access to a printer;
- an examination log on is provided which the candidate must use for all examinations;
- candidates are not permitted to use their own laptops/school log-on in examinations.

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

- If no external invigilator is available, a teacher with no links to the subject(s) being assessed will invigilate;
- A second invigilator will be seated outside the room to act as a runner. Other

arrangements relating to the use of word processors include:

- Non ET students are seated nearest to the printer as they will be the first to print and leave the room

Allocating 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 ICE 7.