Orbis Education Trust

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Policy Name:	WORD PROCESSOR POLICY (EXAMS)
Policy Type:	Statutory
Issue Date:	7th March 2025
To be reviewed:	Annually – 7th March 2026
Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Policy Owner:	Steph Brown

Glossary of abbreviations

JCQ AA	Joint Council of Qualifications : Access Arrangements
JCQ ICE	Joint Council of Qualifications : Instructions for Conducting Exams
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

1. Aims

a. This policy details how the centre complies with JCQ AA, chapter 4 (Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres), section 5.8 (Word processor) and JCQ ICE, sections 14.20-27 Word processors (computers, laptops and tablets) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in examinations.

b. The term 'word processor' (WP) is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet and the use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement/reasonable adjustment.

c. 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 as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

2. Guidance

a. The following principles are applied to access arrangements at the centre:

1) The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.
2) A centre must make decisions on appropriate access arrangement/reasonable adjustment 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. (JCQ AA 4.2.1)
3) Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they are not granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives. (JCQ AA 4.2.2)
4) Candidates may not require the same access arrangement/reasonable adjustment 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 arrangement/reasonable adjustment on a subject-by-subject basis. (JCQ AA 4.2.3)

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

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

3. Criteria used to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments

a. The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams unless there are exceptions.

b. A candidate may be awarded the use of a word processor in examinations where:

1) the candidate may have an approved access arrangement/reasonable adjustment in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology

2) 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

c. The school will:

1) 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 (JCQ AA 5.8.1)

2) award the use of a word processor to candidates where appropriate to their needs (JCQ AA 5.8.4). For example, a candidate with 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 (This list is not exhaustive)

3) permit the use of a word processor where integrity of the assessment can be maintained (JCQ AA 4.2.1)

4) not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (JCQ AA 4.2.2)

5) consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification (JCQ AA 4.2.3)

6) process access arrangements 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 (JCQ AA 4.2.4)

7) provide the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (JCQ AA 5.8.2)

d. Southfield School will not:

1) 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 (JCQ AA 5.8.4)

e. Additionally the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate:

1) 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 (JCQ AA 4.2.4)

2) where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates (JCQ AA 5.8.4)

f. Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be allocated by the IT department in liaison with the SENCo and the exams officer.

g. In exceptional circumstances where the number of compliant word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session:

1) the cohort will be split into two groups
2) one group will sit the exam earlier than or later than the awarding body's published start time
3) the security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with (JCQ ICE 7)

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

a. A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in a room for a smaller group with similar needs.

b. In compliance with the regulations, the centre:

1) will provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (JCQ ICE 14.20)
2) where a candidate is to be seated with the main cohort without the use of a power point, check 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 (JCQ ICE 14.21)
3) will remind the candidate to ensure that the centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer e.g. 12345/8001 – 6391/01 (JCQ ICE 14.22)
4) if a candidate is using a software application that does not allow for the insertion of a header or footer, once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off their typed script, will instruct the candidate 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 (JCQ ICE 14.22)
5) will ensure the candidate understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6 (JCQ ICE 14.23)
6) will ensure the candidate is reminded to save his/her work at regular intervals (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet to ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost) (JCQ ICE 14.24)
7) will instruct the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing to make marking easier for examiners (JCQ ICE 14.24)

c. In compliance with regulations (JCQ ICE 14.25) the centre will ensure the word processor:

1) is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
2) is not used to perform skills which are being assessed
3) is in good working order at the time of the exam
4) is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
5) is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
6) is cleared of any previously stored data

7) does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), e-mail, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets

8) does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given

9) 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

10) does not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the is permission to use this

11) does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed)

12) 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)

d. In compliance with regulations (JCQ ICE 14.25) the centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used:

1) is provided by the centre
2) is cleared of any previously stored data

e. In compliance with regulations (JCQ ICE 14.25) the centre will:

1) 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

2) ensure the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is their own

3) ensure a word processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers

4) ensure, 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) (JCQ ICE 14.26)

5) if a candidate omits to insert the required header or footer, ensure 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 (JCQ ICE 14.22)

6) 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 (JCQ ICE 14.27)

f. In compliance with regulations (JCQ ICE 14.25) the centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used:

1) is provided by the centre
2) is cleared of any previously stored data