

Word Processor Exam Policy

1. 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 and Instructions for conducting examinations. References to 'AA' relate to JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2023-2024 and ICE to JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations 2023-2024.

2. Purpose of the policy

This policy details how the centre allocates, manages and administers the use of word processors in examinations and assessments.

3. Principles for using a word processor

Open Box Education Centre complies with AA chapter 4 Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties regulations and guidance as follows:

(AA 4.2.1)

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.

(AA 4.2.2)

The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

(AA 4.2.3)

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.

(AA 4.2.4)

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.

(AA 4.2.5)

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);
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- literacy support lessons;
- literacy intervention strategies;
- 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.

4. The use of a word processor

Open Box Education Centre complies with AA chapter 5 Access arrangements available as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)

- As default provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off).
- Will provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility enabled for candidates with a scribe access arrangement if this is their normal way of working.
- 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.
- Where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates then this does constitute normal way of working.
- For individual students who choose to word process in lessons and /or for homework this does not constitute normal way of working in the context of exams.
- 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).
- This request must be initiated by teachers or the SENCO, not the candidate.
- Teacher evidence of need must be provided and kept on file.

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

(AA 5.8.3)

- 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

(AA 5.8.4)

- 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

Word processors and their programs

Open Box Education Centre complies with ICE 14.20 – 14.27 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 connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off
- laptops must have the facility to print from a portable storage medium (USB Pen Drive).
- 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
- computer reading (text to speech) software is not included on a word processor unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader
- 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

5. Laptops and tablets

Open Box Education Centre further complies with ICE 14.20 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 or;
- candidates with laptops are seated within the main examination hall with access to a power point
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals
- candidates print on centre specific paper with a pre-printed centre number and clearly marked boxes to write their candidate number
- candidates are instructed to handwrite their candidate number and initial each page 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 present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed is their own
- Open Box may retain electronic copies of word-processed scripts. The electronic copy of a word-processed script may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost. However, Open Box would need to demonstrate to the awarding body that the file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body.

6. Accommodating word processors in examinations

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

- candidates will 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 used.
- word processors will be connected to a printer so that the script can be printed off, or a portable storage device will be allocated for the candidate to use.

7. Criteria for Use of Word Processor

There is not a requirement to process an application for a word processor using Access Arrangements Online. No evidence is needed to support the arrangement for inspection purposes. (This also applies where a candidate is using a word processor on a temporary basis because of a temporary injury.)

[AA 5.8]

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have a firmly established need which will include one or more of:

- 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
- illegible handwriting

The centre will award the use of a word processor only where the following conditions have been met:

- The candidate has a firmly established need.
- It reflects the candidate's normal way of working in the centre and in tests, assessments and mock examinations.

In all cases, it is expected that the candidate would be disadvantaged if access to a word processor were not granted.

Word processors will not be granted if it will result in the candidate having an advantage over a non-word processing candidate.

8. Allocating word processors

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be allocated by the IT department in liaison with the SEND Health and Care Manager and the Exams Officer.

Approved by: (Principal) (date)

Authorised by: (Chair of Governors) (date)

To be reviewed: 1 year

Next review date: September 2024

Date of Review	Reviewed by	Approved by Governors	Date of next review
May 2019 version 1.0	Deirdre de la Plain	07-05-19	May 2022
May 2022 version 1.1	Elinor Fahy	10-05-22	Sep 2022
Sep 2022 version 1.2	Elinor Fahy	11-10-22	Sep 2023
Sep 2023 version 1.3	Samantha Hutton	21-11-23	Sep 2024