



Word Processor Policy (Exams) 2023-24

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Governing Body Sub-Committee with reviewing responsibility: Standards and Curriculum

This policy is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance on access arrangements and instructions for conducting exams.

References in this policy to AA and ICE relate to/are directly taken from the [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2023-2024](#) and [Instructions for conducting examinations 2023-2024](#) publications.

Introduction

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 him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

(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 should consider the need for access arrangements / reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.1)

The SENCO must ensure that the proposed access arrangement / reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage a candidate.

(AA 4.2.7)

The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) / reasonable adjustment(s) before his/her first examination.

Purpose of the policy

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

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

The criteria Stretford Grammar School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments

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.

Exceptions

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

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

The centre will

- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check facility / predictive text disabled (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

Examples of particular types of students that Stretford Grammar School considers would benefit from the use of a word processor are those 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)

The centre will

- 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)

The centre will not:

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses 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)

Centre specific processes

1. Principles for using a word processor in tests, assessments and examinations at Stretford Grammar School

- Students with access to word processors at Stretford Grammar School (S.G.S.) are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled students 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 student.
- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- Students 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 on our students, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

- The use of a word processor is agreed /processed at the start of the course or as soon as an issue is recognised. Students are subsequently aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and controlled assessments/coursework.
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- The use of a word processor for students is only granted if it reflects the support given to the student as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:
 - in the classroom;
 - working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
 - literacy support lessons;
 - literacy intervention strategies;
 - in internal school tests and mock examinations.

2. Use of a word processor in tests, assessments and examinations at Stretford Grammar School

- The use of a word processor will be granted to a student on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury.
- To comply with ICE 14, the centre will provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off), unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20).
- We will only grant the use of a word processor to a student where it is their normal way of working within the centre.
- We will only grant the use of a word processor to a student if it is appropriate to their needs as identified by the SENCo following advice. 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.
- We will provide access to word processors to students in controlled assessments or coursework components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.
- Students will be permitted to use a word processor in an examination to type a response to those questions which require an extended answer and students will be allowed to handwrite shorter answers within the same examination. In this situation a candidate may submit an answer paper where short responses are written on the paper and longer essay type answers are word processed.
- In all cases we will ensure that a word processor cover sheet is completed (when required) and securely attached to each student's typed script.
- We will not simply grant the use of a word processor to a student because:
 - he /she prefers to type rather than write; or
 - he /she can work faster on a keyboard; or
 - he /she uses a laptop at home.

3. Word Processors and their programmes in tests, assessments and examinations at Stretford Grammar School

- Word processors are used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable.
- Word processors and any portable storage medium provided by the S.E.N. department for examinations are to have been cleared by the S.E.N. department of any previously stored data.
- Word processors used in examinations are to be in good working order at the time of the examination.
- Word processors are to be accommodated in such a way that other students are not disturbed and cannot read the screen.
- Where a student using a word processor is accommodated separately, a separate invigilator is to be used.
- Word processors are to be 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 to be printed as soon as possible after the examination is over and students are to be present to verify that the work printed is their own.
- Word processed scripts are to be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers.
- If scripts are not produced under secure conditions we are aware that they may be refused by the Awarding Body.
- Word processors are not to be used to perform skills which are being assessed.
- Word processors are not to be connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
- Students are not to be 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 to be included on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these.
- Predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is to be disabled unless the student has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a scribe cover sheet attached, where required), or the Awarding Body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking.
- Voice recognition technology is not to be included on word processors unless the student has permission to use a scribe or relevant software.
- Word processors are not to be used on the student's behalf by a third party unless the student has permission to use a scribe.

4. Laptops, Tablets and Word Processors in tests, assessments and examinations at Stretford Grammar School

- 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 to be checked before the candidate's examination(s) and the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination (ICE 14.21).
- Students with fully charged laptops or tablets are to be seated within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points.
- Candidates are to be reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer (ICE 14.22).
- Candidates using Notepad or Wordpad software (which do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer) are to be instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished the examination and printed off their typed script. They are to be supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way.
- Each page is to be appropriately numbered (ICE 14.23).
- Students are to be instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing to make marking easier for examiners (ICE 14.24).
- A Word Processor cover sheet will be included with the typed script, if required.
- Candidates will be reminded to save their work at regular intervals. 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 (ICE 14.24).

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 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
- 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), e-mail, the Internet, social media sites, or 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 or is using speech recognition technology (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 or relevant software
- is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

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 (ICE 14.25)

Printing the script after the exam has ended

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 his or her own
- a word-processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- if a candidate omits to insert the required header or footer, he/she is instructed to handwrite the details as a header or footer; the candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that he/she is solely performing this 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 file has been kept securely. The Head of Centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body. (ICE 14.27)

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 section 7 of ICE.