



DISCOVERY
EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Word Processor Policy (Examinations) 2023/24

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Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Introduction..... | 3 |
| 2. Purpose..... | 3 |
| 3. The Criteria Used to Award and Allocate Word Processors for Examinations and Assessments at CHS and SMS | 4 |
| Exceptions..... | 4 |
| 4. Centre-Specific Processes..... | 5 |
| 5. Word Processor Use | 5 |
| 6. Arrangements at the Time of the Assessment for the Use of a Word Processor | 6 |
| 7. Portable Storage Medium | 7 |
| 8. Printing the Script after the Examination has Ended | 7 |
| 9. Centre-Specific Processes..... | 7 |
| Allocating Word Processors at the Time of the Assessment..... | 7 |

This Policy is reviewed and updated annually upon the publication of updated Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations and guidance on access arrangements and instructions for conducting examinations.

References to AARA and ICE in this Policy relate to/are directly taken from the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2023-2023 and Instructions for conducting examinations 2023-2024 publications.

1. Introduction

The use of a word processor in examinations and assessments is an available access arrangement/reasonable adjustment (AARA 4.2.1).

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure that, where possible, barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them 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 (AARA 4.2.2).

Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AARA 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. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinators (SENDCos) must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis (AARA 4.2.1).

The SENDCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage a candidate (AARA 4.2.7).

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

2. Purpose

This Policy details how Chase High School (CHS) and St. Martin's School (SMS) comply with AARA Chapter 4 - Managing the needs of candidates and principles for Centres), Section 5.8 (Word Processor) and ICE (Sections 14.20 to 14.27) 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.

3. The Criteria Used to Award and Allocate Word Processors for Examinations and Assessments at CHS and SMS

The 'normal way of working' for examination candidates, as directed by the Head of Centre, is that candidates handwrite their examinations, 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:

- allocates 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 (AARA 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 (AARA 5.8.4).
- only permits the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AARA 4.2.1);
- does not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AARA 4.2.2);
- considers on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate needs to use a word processor in each specification (AARA 4.2.3);
- processes 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 that arrangements are always approved before an examination or assessment (AARA 4.2.4);
- provides the use of word processors to candidates in Non-Examination Assessment (NEA) components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AARA 5.8.2).

The Centre does 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 (AARA 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 (AARA 4.2.4);
- where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the Centre provides word processors to all candidates (AARA 5.8.4).

4. Centre-Specific Processes

The use of a word processor in examinations is only permitted to particular types of candidates. For example, candidates with:

- a learning difficulty, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
- a medical condition;
- a physical impairment or disability;
- a sensory impairment;
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand;
- poor handwriting.

For the use of a word processor to be permitted under these categories, one or more of the following criteria must be met and agreed by the Examinations Officer and/or SENDCo.

- A screen has been undertaken to determine writing speed/legibility;
- A screen can be undertaken if requested by parents/carers or in response to teacher and SENDCo feedback;
- Writing speed has been assessed with a standardised score under 84;
- A student's ability to write legibly has been assessed;
- When students have been assessed with an approved qualified assessor in one of the following ways, and have documented evidence of a standardised score under 84 for writing speed and legibility:
 - Private diagnosis;
 - External assessment;
 - Internal assessment with approved school assessor.
- There is a need for a candidate to use a word processor on a temporary basis as a consequence of temporary injury, for example, a broken arm;
- There is documented evidence that 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;
- Physical impairment or disability;
- Visual Impairment.

5. Word Processor Use

- If a student is entitled to use a scribe or word processor based on assessment results, CHS and SMS encourages the scribe to be replaced with the use of a word processor in order to establish this as a normal way of working in class, assessments and examinations.

- Evidence is gathered throughout the year from classwork, assessment and examination papers by the School's SEND department.
- If there is insufficient supporting evidence and/or a student is not proven to be using the arrangement granted, nor has it been established as a student's normal way of working, under JCQ regulations, the use of a word processor is removed and parents/carers advised.

6. Arrangements at the Time of the Assessment for the Use of a Word Processor

A candidate using a word processor is usually accommodated away from the main examination halls.

In compliance with the regulations, the Centre:

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (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);
- (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 examination to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination (ICE 14.21);
- ensures that 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 (ICE 14.22);
- ensures that the candidate understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23);
- ensures that the candidate is reminded to save their work at regular intervals (or, where possible, an IT technician sets 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);
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing to make marking easier for examiners (ICE 14.24).

(ICE 14.25)

The Centre ensures that the word processor:

- is only used in a way that ensures that 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 examination;
- 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, 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.

7. Portable Storage Medium

(ICE 14.25)

The Centre ensures that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used:

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

8. Printing the Script after the Examination has Ended

(ICE 14.25)

The Centre ensures that:

- the word processor is either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed, or has 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;
- 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 (ICE 14.22).

The Centre also ensures 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).

9. Centre-Specific Processes

Allocating Word Processors at the Time of the Assessment

Appropriate examination-compliant word processors are provided by the IT department in liaison with the SENDCo and the Examinations 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 examination session, the cohort is split into two groups. One group sits the examination earlier than or later than the Awarding Body's published start time.

The security of the examination is maintained at all times, and candidates are supervised in line with Section 7 of ICE.