Word Processor Policy, Exams

2023-24

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the academy. The Local Governing Body will review the policy, unless there are significant changes in the interim period.

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Revision History:

Version:	Date:	Author:	Summary of Changes:
1.0	04.09.2023	Miss A Thorley	New Policy

Contents

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 2022-2023](#) and [Instructions for conducting examinations 2022-2023](#) publications.

Introduction

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

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 following principles are applied to access arrangements at Castle Mead Academy:

- 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 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 4.2.1)

- Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they are not granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question. (AA 4.2.2)

- 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. SENDCO must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis. (AA 4.2.3)

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

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

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Castle Mead Academy 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 (Word processors (computers, laptops and tablets) 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. To ensure that all those preparing students for their exams are fully conversant with the regulations around the allocation of a word processor to a student for their exams. There are a number of reasons why a student would be allowed to use a word processor in a public examination. Prior to a decision upon this being made school would assess the needs of the individual student with the SENCO.

The criteria Castle Mead Academy uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

Castle Mead Academy's statement to meet the requirement, as outlined in the JCQ Access Arrangements guidance.

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.

Castle Mead Academy 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 candidates where appropriate to their needs (AA 5.8.4)
  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 or physical disability where the use a word processor makes the examination more accessible and alleviates any potential pain which may occur through handwriting.
  - sensory impairment and use of a word processor makes the examination more accessible.
  - a condition where they experience planning or organisational problems when writing by hand and the use of a word processor aids access to the examination paper.
  - poor handwriting (AA 5.8.4) A student whose handwriting is illegible.
    (This list is not exhaustive)

- 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).

- 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)

Castle Mead Academy will not::
- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because the scholar now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because the scholar uses a laptop at home. (AA 5.8.4)

Centre specific processes

- The granting of a word processor must always be in line with the current JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.
- The use of a laptop 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 class and/or in internal school tests and mock examinations.
- The use of a word processor should place the student on a level playground with other students, neither advantaging or disadvantaging the student.

The process by which access to a word processor will be awarded is as follows:

- Teaching staff at Castle Mead Academy identify students who use a word processor as their normal way of working during the first term of the academic year academic year.
- At the end of each academic year student needs are assessed and evaluated and if a student's needs have changed these will be identified and the need met with the provision of a word processor.
- During the first term of the academic year access arrangements applications are processed and that will include the use of a word processor. The use of a word processor to a candidate will only be granted if it is their normal way of working within the school, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20).
- The use of a word processor will only be granted to a student if it is appropriate to their needs. (For example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a laptop due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand).
- Castle Mead Academy will not grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because the scholar prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a word processor at home.
- The candidate must be proficient in word processing so it's an appropriate arrangement.

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

A candidate using a word processor will be accommodated either in an IT classroom or alternative smaller room, away from the exam main hall. We may also have to accommodate laptop to the back of the main exam hall if space becomes an issue.

In compliance with the regulations the centre:
- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check 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 exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the exam (ICE 14.21)
- Work must be completed in a minimum of 12pt font, double spacing

- ensures 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) along with a page number (ICE 14.23).
- If a candidate is using the software application Notepad or Wordpad these do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer. In these instances, once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off the candidates typed script, the candidate is instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that the candidate is solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way.
- ensures the candidate understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23)
- ensures the candidate is reminded to save their work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet (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) (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).
- Students are accommodated in such a way that other students are not disturbed and cannot read the screen.

Notifying students and staff
- Students granted a word processor for exams will also be allocated a word processor for use in their lessons by the IT department.
- The SENCo advises staff which students are permitted the use of a word processor for exams.

The centre will ensure the word processor (ICE 14.25)**:**
- does not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar software 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 used purely for exams, always kept in the Exams secure store and only accessed by the Exams Officer.
- Is cleared of any previously stored data prior to the examination.
- Is in good working order at the time of the examination and checked throughout the exam series.
- 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 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
- 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 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

(ICE 14.25)

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
- The memory sticks are stored in the Exams Office, they are returned to the Exams Officer once the exam is complete.
- Students are not permitted to use their own memory stick or to leave with the stick issued to them for the exam

Printing the script after the exam has ended.

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure:

- Documents are printed after the examination is done by the Exams Officer or invigilator. The students are present to verify that the work printed is their own.
- 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
- 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, the candidate is instructed to handwrite the details as a header or footer; the candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that the scholar is solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way (ICE 14.22)
- 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 ALS lead/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 7.2 of ICE.]

Changes 2023/2024

No changes applicable.

Centre-specific changes

Upon review in September 2023, no centre-specific updates or changes were applicable to this document