EXAMINATIONS AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

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1   Introduction

The provision for access arrangements (including the use of a word processor) for GCSE, IGCSE, GCE and BTEC comes under JCQ regulations published in the document 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' (AA), which is updated annually. IB pupils must meet the requirements published in the IB document, 'Access and Inclusion Policy'. This policy details how Oakham School manages and administers access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, and the use of word processors (including laptops) in examinations and assessments in accordance with these regulations.

1.1   This policy is consistent with:
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion policy
- SEN and EAL policy
- Disability policy
- Accessibility plan

2   Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Normally every pupil applying for exam access arrangements will already have an Educational Psychologist report. This report usually provides important evidence of a learning difficulty. The school uses this information to inform Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and access arrangements for internal examinations.

The purpose of an access arrangement 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 due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

Supplementary up-to-date testing is required to inform access arrangements for public examinations. This testing should take place as soon as possible from Form 3 upwards by the Learning Support department.

When a candidate progresses from GCSE to GCE, BTEC or IB, further evidence is required to establish that the candidate continues to meet the criteria for access arrangements. For pupils undertaking International A-Levels, further testing may also be required. Pupils joining the school in Form 6 will be assessed by a qualified assessor in school. This will take place in the first term of the Sixth Form.

2.1   Extra time
If a pupil has a pre-existing Educational Psychologist report, it might contain a recommendation for extra time but this, on its own, is not a guarantee that extra time will be awarded. Extra time is only awarded to pupils following supplementary testing by the

Learning Support Department and the full allocation of extra time is only awarded to pupils who have qualifying scores.

For the majority of pupils, the school is required to compile an evidence file that clearly demonstrates the need for extra time on a regular basis in lessons as well as in timed tests. Comments and observations from teaching staff in relevant subjects are used to evidence why the candidate needs extra time and how he/she uses the extra time awarded. The regulations do explain that if evidence is not found to support the application, the Examinations Officer will not be able to award extra time in an examination.

2.2   Smaller/separate venue

A smaller/separate venue might be arranged for examinations if there is sufficient medical evidence that this is necessary. There needs to be documented emotional/mental health reasons or a medical condition before a separate/smaller venue will be considered. Some pupils need to be in a smaller space to offset severe anxiety or to allow for occasional prompting or rest breaks. Occasionally the needs of a student will be such that they require a completely separate venue. A smaller/separate venue must reflect the pupil's **normal and current way of working** in internal school tests and mock examinations.

2.3   Supervised rest/movement breaks

Supervised rest/movement breaks are only considered for pupils with a documented need for rest/movement breaks. This might be due to emotional difficulties/stress, medical reasons such as chronic fatigue syndrome or an inability to focus for a long period of time. In all cases there must be supporting documentation.

2.4   Examination reading pen

An examination reading pen is only offered to pupils for whom reading is a major difficulty and who have trialled the use of a reading pen and established this as their **normal way of working** within the centre.

2.5   Reader/ computer reader

A reader or computer reader is only offered to pupils with JCQ approval for whom reading is a major difficulty and who have established this as their **normal way of working** within the centre.

2.6   Scribe/ speech recognition technology

A scribe or speech recognition technology is only offered to pupils who have JCQ approval and reflects their **normal way of working** in the centre.

3   Use of a word processor

Oakham School, in line with the JCQ regulations, allows pupils to word process examinations only if word processing is their **normal way of working** and if they fulfil the criteria outlined below.

All candidates must have been assessed and approved by the Learning Support Department, prior to using word processors in external examinations and assessments.

3.1   AA guidance

Using a word processor Oakham School complies with AA guidance (5.8) regarding

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the use of word processors:

'Centres are allowed to provide 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. 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'. (AA, 5.8.1).

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's **normal way of working** within the centre.

The school will consider allowing a student to use a word processor as part of their normal way of working in a number of situations, including the following:
- 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.

This list is not exhaustive (AA, 5.8.4).

3.2   Normal way of working
'Normal way of working' is defined as support given to the candidate in school for one or more of the following:
- in the classroom (where appropriate);
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- support lessons;
- intervention strategies;
- in internal school tests/examinations;
- mock examinations. (AA, 4.2.5).

At Oakham School we consider that a 'normal way of working' would in almost all circumstances be established throughout the two-year period leading up to a public examination. However, this should certainly be for a minimum of one year, unless there are exceptional circumstances. In all cases, a 'normal way of working' necessarily entails the candidate having used a word processor for the mock examination of the qualification in question. The only exception to this is where an arrangement may need to be put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment at the time of an exam or assessment.

'The use of word processors in non-examination assessment components will be considered standard practice unless prohibited by the specification'. (AA, 5.8.2).

Access arrangements should be processed at the start of the course. Schools, for

example, should be able to process applications at the start of or during the first year of a two-year GCSE course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working during Years 7 to 9. However, 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, access arrangements should be applied for as soon as is practicable. (AA, 4.2.4).
It is permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers. (AA, 5.8.3).

N.B. 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 computer screen. (AA, 5.8.3).

Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification (AA, 4.2.3). 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 in discussion with the SENCo and Examinations Officer, with the **final decision taken by the SENCo**.

Parents or pupils may appeal to the Headteacher who will then investigate to check that an appropriate
process was carried out prior to the decision being taken.

3.3   ICE word processor instructions
Oakham School complies with ICE 14.25-14.27 word processor instructions by ensuring:

A word processor:
- must be used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;
- must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used. An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate. When needed, the centre must provide a memory stick, which is cleared of any previously stored data, to the candidate;
- must be in good working order at the time of the examination;
- must 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 required;
- must either be connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. This must be done after the examination is over. The candidate must be present to verify that the work printed is his or her own. Word processed scripts must be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers;

- must be used to produce scripts under secure conditions, otherwise they may be refused;
- must not be used to perform skills which are being assessed;
- must not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), email, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets;
- must not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these;
- must 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;
- must not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader;
- must not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software;
- must not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

An electronic or printed copy of word-processed scripts may be retained securely. The electronic copy of a word-processed script may be accepted by an awarding body where the submitted printed copy has been lost.

3.4   Computers and laptops
Oakham School further complies with ICE 14.20 – 14.24 instructions by ensuring: 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 and sign it.

3.5   Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors include the following:
On completion of the examination an invigilator will remind the student to save all work onto the exam account created for them or onto a memory stick provided by Oakham School;
The invigilator will accompany the student to the printer for the work to be printed off and verified. Candidates will be asked to sign and number each printed sheet to confirm the work is complete and is their own.

3.6   On completion of the exam:
When all work is printed and verified, it will be enclosed inside the pupil's examination script for submission to the awarding body with a completed word processor cover sheet, should one be required by the awarding organisation.