

Exams and Word Processor Policy

Author: ESI / LT / LFD

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Rationale and aim

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 and 'ICE' to JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Oakham School manages and administers the use of word processors (including laptops) in examinations and assessments in line with the JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022/23. All candidates must have been assessed and approved by the Learning Support Department, prior to using word processors in external examinations and assessments.

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



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

Word processors and their programmes

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

4.25 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.

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.

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.

On completion of the exam:

- When all work is printed and verified, it will be enclosed inside the student's examination script for submission to the awarding body with a completed word processor cover sheet, should one be required by the awarding organisation