

Beech Lodge School
WORD PROCESSOR POLICY (EXAMS)
2019/20

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Approved/reviewed by	Lucy Barnes
Date of next review	September 2020

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Names
Proprietor	Daniela Shanly
Head of Centre	Lucy Barnes
SENCo	Lucy Barnes
Exams Officer	Sarah Johnstone
SLT members	Daniela Shanly, Lucy Barnes, Jack Rider, Karen McIlfatrick, Dan Gillespie
IT manager	Geoff Taylor

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Introduction

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 2017-2018* and ICE to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2018-2019*.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how the centre manages and administers the use of word processors (including laptops and tablets) in examinations and assessments.

Principles for using a word processor

Beech Lodge School complies with AA chapter 4 *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* regulations and guidance as follows:

(AA 4.2.1)

- Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates 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 candidate

(AA4.2.2)

- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question

(AA4.2.3)

- Candidates 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 of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis

(AA4.2.4)

- The use of a word processor is normally considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course providing the centre has firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working for a candidate
- Candidates are made aware when they will have the use of a word processor for timetabled examinations and non-examination assessments

(AA4.2.5)

- The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:
 - in the classroom (where appropriate); or
 - working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
 - literacy support lessons; or
 - literacy intervention strategies; and/or
 - in internal school tests/examinations
 - mock examinations

The only exceptions to the above would be 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.

Centre specific processes

Beech Lodge is an alternative/special provision school and as such, it is recognised that a high proportion of students have complex/multiple special needs. Correspondingly, a high proportion of students will therefore use a word processor routinely in class as their *normal way of working* to enable them to access the learning and the examination system.

The use of a word processor

Beech Lodge complies with AA chapter 5 *Access arrangements available* as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off)
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) within the centre
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs (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)
 - (The above also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets)

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification

(AA 5.8.3)

- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers
- Are also aware that 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 screen

(AA 5.8.4)

- In all cases, ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script (according to the instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- Does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home

Centre specific processes

Use of a word processor will not be granted just because a candidate prefers to use one instead of writing. Instead, the following criteria will be used to determine which candidates would benefit from use of a word processor.

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability/impairment
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand – this may stem motor planning issues such as Dyspraxia or alternatively language processing issues
- Poor/illegible handwriting

Word processors and their programmes

Beech Lodge School complies with ICE 8.8 *Word processors* instructions by ensuring:

- word processors are used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used
- an unauthorised memory stick is not permitted for use by a candidate
- where required, candidates are provided with a memory stick, which has been cleared of any previously stored data, by a nominated member of centre staff
- word processors are in good working order at the time of the examination
- word processors are 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 separately, a separate invigilator is used
- word processors are 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 printed after the examination is over
- candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own
- word processed scripts are inserted in/attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers (and according to instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions, and if they are not then the centre is aware that they may be refused by the awarding body
- word processors are not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- word processors are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
- candidates are not 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 included on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these
- predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is disabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a completed scribe cover sheet included), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- voice recognition technology is not included on word processors unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- word processors are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

Laptops and tablets

Beech Lodge further complies with ICE 8.8 instructions by ensuring:

- 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 checked before the candidate's examination(s) with the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination
- candidates with fully charged laptops or tablets are given the opportunity to be seated within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points
- candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer

- candidates using Notepad or Wordpad software (which do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer) are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished the examination and printed off their typed script; candidates are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way
- candidates are instructed to appropriately number each page
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals
- where it is possible 'autosave' is set up on each laptop/tablet
- 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

Accommodating word processors in examinations

Candidates using word processors (including laptops or tablets) are internally accommodated in the following manner:

- Candidates using word processors will be seated in the main hall/allocated room alongside the wall with the easiest accessible power sockets. The exception to this is where a candidate is permitted to sit their exam in a separate room to the other candidates.
- The candidates will be seated at the appropriate distances apart as designated in the ICE regulations
- The charging leads will be connected to ensure that the word processor does not run out of battery during the exam
- Power extension leads will be used if necessary to ensure that every candidate can charge their computer and that they can be seated appropriately in line with regulations
- Any leads/wires that trail along the floor will be secured to ensure that they do not pose a trip hazard and that they pay due regard to any other health and safety considerations.
- The word processors will be checked to ensure they are in full working order prior to the exam and they will be set up and ready to go at the start of the exam.

Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors in exams

Invigilators have a key role in upholding the integrity of the external examination/assessment process.

- The centre is responsible for ensuring that use of a word processor will not cause distraction for other students and that the screen is not overlooked or can be read by others.
- Where a scribe/speech recognition technology is being used, it must not be overheard by or cause distraction to other candidates.
- The head of centre must ensure that all persons appointed as invigilators are responsible adults, are appropriately trained and fully understand the rules of the access arrangements being used.
- Yearly training sessions must be organised for invigilators and those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under exam conditions.
- A record of training given to invigilators and those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under exam conditions must be retained on file until the deadline for enquiries about results has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed.
- Invigilators must be familiar with the JCQ ICE document and fully understand their role and what is and what is not permissible in the examination room.
- A word processor cover sheet must be completed during the course of the examination and attached to the script

The criteria Beech Lodge School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates at Beech Lodge School, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

Awarding word processors

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded the use of a word processor in exams where he/she 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.

Exceptions might include where a candidate has, for example:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- a medical condition
- a physical disability/impairment
- a sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand – this may stem motor planning issues such as Dyspraxia or alternatively language processing issues
- Poor/illegible handwriting

It is permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions ie. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers. The need to use a word processor may be considered on a subject by subject basis as some examinations require more simplistic answers and are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet.

Conversely, other examinations require a significant amount of writing or place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers and these are where candidates will frequently need to type.

Allocating word processors

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be allocated by the IT department in liaison with the SENCo and the exams officer.

Statement produced by: **Sarah Johnstone, Exams Officer**