

## Beech Lodge School

# WORD PROCESSOR POLICY (EXAMS)

2021/22

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

<b>Approved/reviewed by</b>	Lucy Barnes
<b>Date of next review</b>	September 2022

### Key staff involved in the policy

<b>Role</b>	<b>Names</b>
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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 2021-2022 and Instructions for conducting examinations 2021-2022 publications.

## **Introduction**

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

(AA 4.2.1)

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 integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

(AA 4.2.2)

Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

(AA 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. ALS leads/SENCOs must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.1)

The Additional Learning Support lead/SENCO must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not disadvantage or advantage a candidate.

(AA 4.2.7)

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

## **Purpose of the policy**

This policy details how Beech Lodge complies with AA chapter 4 (Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres), section 5.8 (Word processor) and ICE (sections 14.20-25) 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.

## **The use of a word processor**

The centre will

- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check/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 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 (AA 5.8.4)

- 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)

The centre will not

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. (AA 5.8.4)

### Exceptions

The only exceptions to the above where the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate would be

- 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)

### 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.

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

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 exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the exam (ICE 14.21)
- 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)

If a candidate is using the software application Notepad or Wordpad these do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer. In such circumstances once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off their typed script, they are instructed to handwrite their 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.

- 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 in order to make marking easier for examiners (ICE 14.24)

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure the word processor:

- 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 not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- 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 and is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- 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), spreadsheets etc.
- 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 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

### **Printing the script after the exam is over**

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure

- 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
- the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is his or their own
- a word processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- where an awarding body requires a cover sheet to be completed this is included with the candidate's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions)

### **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 i.e. 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**