The Kimberley School Word processor policy (Exams) 2026/27

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations and reflect centre practice

Approved/reviewed by	
Andrew Park	
Date of next review	September 2027

Key staff involved in awarding and allocating word processors for exams

Role	Name(s)
SENCo or equivalent	Ann Lawrence
Exams Manager / officer	Helen Bullock
SLT member(s)	Andrew Park, Danny Knapczyk, Jo Clemmet, Ann Lawrence, Jonathan Saunders, Kaylee Eatherington,Claire Bruce, James Clegg
IT manager	David Newton
Assessor(s)	Sarah Meakin
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Sarah Meakin

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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 AARA and ICE relate to/are directly taken from the current Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for conducting examinations

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 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.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo (or equivalent role) to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

(AA 4.2.2)
Although access arrangements/reasonable 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. SENCos or equivalent **must** consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.1)
The SENCo, (or equivalent role) **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

(AA 4.2.7)
The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) /reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how The Kimberley School complies with AA (chapter 4) Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres, (chapter 5.8) Word processor **and** ICE (sections 14.20-25) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of a 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 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 examinations 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

Candidates are assessed by the Centre Assessor for word processor need according to the regulations.
Following on from this assessment, word processing is offered if it is their normal way of working and this is monitored by teaching staff and Centre Assessor.

The Word Processing Policy form is signed by the candidate and kept with the Access Arrangements file.

The Exams Officer liaises with the Learning Support Leader, Centre Assessor and Learning Mentors and arranges word processors for selected candidates for mock exams as well as examination boards exams.

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

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in the main venue with the main cohort unless they have additional requirements that require a separate room.

In compliance with the regulations the centre:

- provides a word processor, with the spelling and grammar check facility and predictive text 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 laptop or tablet before the candidate's exam(s) to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged to last 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 or 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 this does not allow for the insertion of a header or footer. 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 laptopor table 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 (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 (a scribe cover sheet must be completed)
- does not include AI tools
- is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed)

AI tools

For paper-based examinations where candidates are using a word processor and are not allowed internet access, the centre will ensure all AI tools that the candidate could use during the examination are turned off.

This means:

- AI features inside the word processor itself (for example, writing assistants, "rewrite this" suggestions, AI summaries)
- AI features built into the device's operating system (for example, Microsoft Copilot, Apple Intelligence or similar tools that the candidate could open from outside the word processor)
- AI features available through any web browser or other application installed on the device

If the examination tests spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG), the centre will ensure that spell-check and grammar-check tools are turned off (This will include any application on the device that offers these features, not just the main word processor, as even simple applications such as Notepad now include spell-check).

The centre will:

- identify if AI and writing-assistance tools are available on the devices being used for examinations and make sure they are turned off.
    - AI can be generated from three places:
        - the application the candidate is using
        - the device's operating system, and
        - the network the device is connected to
- not assume that turning one of these off is enough on its own
- test its chosen approach before the examination to confirm that the candidate cannot access any AI or assistance tools during the examination

Portable storage medium

(ICE 14.25) The centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used

- This medium is not used by the centre
- is cleared of any previously stored data

Printing the script after the exam has ended

(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
- if a candidate omits to insert the required header or footer, they are instructed to handwrite the 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 (ICE 14.22)

After the exam

The centre:

- will ensure that 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)
- will keep candidate work safe and send it to the awarding body for marking by the method the awarding body stipulates (ICE 14.25)
- 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 electronic file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body. (ICE 14.27)

Centre specific processes

Candidates are seated at the back of the main exam hall with laptops connect via extension leads as a backup in case of battery failure, unless they have additional requirements that require a separate room.

There are exam specific ‘logins’ for students to use (i.e. examstudent1) which limit the software available to Wordpad only and does not allow internet or network access. Spell check is disabled unless the awarding body’s specification permits the use of automatic spell checking. Students will be allocated an exams login and password for the exam.

The work can only be saved into a specific directory, which the examinations officer and student can only see or access. The students work is printed out with the student present to verify that the work is their work, candidates must ensure that their centre number, candidate number and unit code are typed or handwritten on each page. Once printed the work is deleted from the specific directory by the examinations officer.

Appendix 1

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

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, 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.

The following list indicates the particular types of candidates which The Kimberley School considers would benefit from using a word processor:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to write legibly
- a medical condition
- a physical disability
- a sensory impairment
- planning and organisation problems when writing by hand poor handwriting

(the above list is not exhaustive)

The use of word processors

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded/allocated 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.

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

- on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury at the time of the assessment
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

A word processor cannot 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 Kimberley School only allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate where the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text will be disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (or for medical reasons) within our school. Spell check will be disabled unless the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking.

Arrangements for the use of word processors at the time of the assessment

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be provided by the IT department in liaison with the Centre Assessor 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 of ICE.

WordPad is the software installed on word processors used for examination purposes. Word processors will be in good working order at the time of the examination. Candidates may use their answer booklet in addition to the word processor if they wish to do so. Candidates are advised to save their work at least every 10 minutes, type in size 12 font and to use double spacing. Printing will be carried out after the examination is over, and the candidate must be present to verify that the work printed is his/her own. Candidates must ensure that their centre number, candidate number and unit code are typed or handwritten on each page.

Form 4 JCQ /WP word processor cover sheet will be completed and attached to the candidate's script to verify where (and if) any questions have been answered in the answer booklet.

Statement produced by: **Sarah Meakin** Statement date: January 2024