



# WOODBIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

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## WORD PROCESSOR POLICY 2025 - 2026

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 [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025-2026](#) and [Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2025-2026](#) publications.

## Introduction

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

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. (AARA 5.8.1)

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 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. (AARA 4.2.1)

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 to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations. (AARA 4.2.1)

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

Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question. (AARA 4.2.2)

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. (AARA 4.2.3)

The Additional Learning Support lead/SENCo **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage a candidate. (AARA 4.2.1)

Where a candidate is found to have slow writing speed when handwriting, a word processor should be offered to mitigate for this before considering the use of 25% extra time. Where a candidate opts to use a word processor to mitigate for slow writing speed, this cannot then be used in conjunction with 25% extra time. However, if the candidate has other processing speed scores which are a) within the below average range or b) one within the below average range and another within the low average range, a word processor can be used alongside the application of 25% extra time. (AARA 5.2.2)

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 Woodbridge High School complies with AARA chapter 4 (Managing the needs of candidates - principles for centres), section 5.8 (Word processor) and ICE (sections 14.20-27) 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 (AARA 5.8.1)
- award the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs

Needs may include

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to write legibly
  - a medical condition
  - a physical disability
  - a sensory impairment
  - planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
  - poor handwriting (AARA 5.8.4)
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AARA 4.2.1)
  - not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AARA 4.2.2)
  - consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification (AARA 4.2.3)
  - consider the needs of the candidate at the start of the candidate's course leading to a qualification, based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the candidate's needs and 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests/exams, mock exams etc. and confirm arrangements in place before the candidate takes an external exam or assessment, ensuring arrangements are always approved **before** an examination or assessment (AARA 4.2.4)
  - provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AARA 5.8.2)

The centre will not

- grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home (AARA 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 (AARA 4.2.4)
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates (AARA 5.8.4)

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

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in one of the main exam rooms.

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 a laptop or tablet before the candidate's exam(s) 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/ 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 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 or 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), e-mail, the Internet, social media sites or 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 computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader
- does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed) or relevant software
- 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)

## **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 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) (ICE 14.26)
- 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)

The centre 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)

## The criteria Woodbridge High 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 use of word processors

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded/allocated the use of a word processor in exams, where the candidate has a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way of working and by not being awarded a word processor they would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates.

Needs 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
- a sensory impairment
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- poor handwriting

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

### 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 ALS lead/SENCo 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.

*Policy Reviewers: Mr T. Bhullar (Associate Headteacher), Ms A. Boaten-Rolfe (Head of Inclusion) and Mrs J. Smith (Data and Examinations Assistant)*

*Approval: Approved by C&S Committee on 4th November 2025*

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