

Word Processor Policy (Exams) 2024/2025

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by

Approved by EMT and reviewed by
nominated SENCo and Exams Officer

Date of next review

September 2025

Key staff involved in awarding and allocating word processors for exams

Role	Name(s)
Nominated SENCo	James Early
Exams officer	Samantha King
SLT member(s)	Adam Thomas

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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 2024/2025* and 'ICE' to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2024/2025*.

Purpose of this Policy

This policy details how the centre manages and administers the use of word processors (including laptops and tablets) in examinations and assessments. The production of this Policy is a requirement of JCQ Regulations.

Principles for using a word processor

Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford Upon Avon College complies with JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2024/2025*: Chapter 4: - “Managing the needs of candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties” regulations as follows:

(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 them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of 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 to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.*

(AA 4.2.2)

- ▶ *Although access arrangements/adjustments adjustment (e.g. use of word processor) 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 (e.g. use of word processor) in each specification. SENCos (or equivalent role) **must** consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.*

(AA 4.2.4)

- ▶ *Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments (e.g. use of word processor) is normally considered processed at the start of the course, having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.*

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/reasonable adjustments should be applied for as soon as is practicable. Centres must process applications as detailed in Chapter 8, section 8.3 using Access arrangements online where required.

(AA 4.2.5)

The arrangement put in place, (e.g. use of word processor), must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre†, for example:

- ▶ *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.*

This is commonly referred to as ‘normal way of working’.

†The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place due to a temporary injury or impairment

Centre specific processes

In addition to ‘normal way of working’ (AA 4.2.5), use of a word processor will only be put in place if:

- ▶ an Individual Support Plan (ISP) produced in Solihull College & University Centre/Stratford upon Avon College, or Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) or Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA) report which clearly defines that the use of a word processor is part of the support offer for the candidate; evidence of Normal Way of Working (NWoW).
- ▶ a completed access arrangement pack from Solihull College & University Centre/Stratford upon Avon College support staff is received and the nominated SENCo can confirm that use of word processor is appropriate for the specific subject for exams and assessments.

The use of a word processor

- ▶ *Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford Upon Avon College complies with JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2024/2025: Chapter 5: - “Access Arrangements and Adjustments” regulations as follows:*

(AA 5.8.1)

To provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text switched off where it is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

For example, the candidate's quality of language significantly improves when using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand. (This also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets.)

(AA 5.8.2)

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

(AA 5.8.3)

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. NB 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 as the candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and computer screen.

Centre specific processes

- ▶ A Solihull College & University Centre/Stratford upon Avon College ISP must clearly detail that normal way of working is established, and that the candidate is proficient in using a word processor.
- ▶ Use of word processor will not be granted just because a candidate prefers to use one. (see AA publication page 54).

Word processors and their programmes

Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford Upon Avon College complies with [ICE Access Arrangements 14.25](#) by ensuring the following for use of word processors:

- a) is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- b) is not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- c) is in good working order at the time of the exam
- d) is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- e) is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable

- f) is cleared of any previously stored data
- g) 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, spreadsheets
- h) does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these
- i) 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
- j) does not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader
- k) does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed)
- l) 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 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 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)*

Centre specific processes

- ▶ Additional Needs Support Tutors and Specialised Assessors clearly define the parameters for the use of a word processor in the application for Access Arrangements (e-folder) for the candidate and the nominated SENCo confirms in Part 3 of the Form 8 the specific arrangements required.
- ▶ Usual practice for examination is use of desktop word processor PC.

Laptops and tablets

Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford Upon Avon College further complies with *ICE Access Arrangements 14.20 – 14.27* by ensuring:

- ▶ Tablets are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged. Their purpose is to be 'free-standing'.

- ▶ The battery capacity of a laptop or a tablet must be checked before the candidate's examination(s) and the centre must ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination.
- ▶ The use of a fully-charged laptop or tablet will allow centres to seat a candidate within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points.
- ▶ Candidates must be 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.

If a candidate is using the software application NotePad or WordPad, these do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer. In these instances, once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off his/her typed script, he/she must handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate must be supervised to ensure that he/she is solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way.

- ▶ Each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6.
- ▶ To make marking easier for examiners, candidates should use a minimum font size of 12pt and double spacing.
- ▶ Invigilators must remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals. Alternatively, an IT technician can set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet. This will ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost.
- ▶ An awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet to be included with the candidate's typed script.

Accommodating word processors in examinations

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

- ▶ Appropriate seating and lighting for using a word processor is planned for, and matches the NWOW for the candidate, with regards to laptop or PC allocation
- ▶ Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors include those highlighted in the [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) and [Instructions for conducting examinations](#).

Centre Specific Arrangements and Statement from Senior Management member – Adam Thomas – Director of Student Services.

Use of a Word Processor for Exams and Assessments – Senior Management Statement:

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates is defined by an ISP and the nominated SENCo confirms that the use of a word processor is requested and planned for.

Applying for Word Processors

All applications must be made to the nominated SENCo, who will liaise with the Exams Officer, using the relevant documentation, i.e. Form 8 Application or a Short Concise File Note for Exams processes, providing clear evidence of need and NWoW. The deadline for requests are as per JCQ deadlines – 2024/2025 exam series.

Awarding word processors

The nominated SENCo will determine if a candidate may be **awarded** the use of a word processor in exams where he/she has a firmly established need, that the use of a word processor reflects the candidate's normal way of working and that by not being awarded a word processor the candidate in question would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates.

For example:

- ▶ diagnosed & documented learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly.
- ▶ diagnosed & documented medical condition restricting upper body movement associated with handwriting tasks.
- ▶ diagnosed & documented physical disability restricting handwriting tasks.
- ▶ diagnosed & documented sensory impairment restricting access to handwriting tasks.
- ▶ planning and organisational problems when writing by hand, evidenced by subject/support tutors of *Solihull College & University Centre or Stratford Upon Avon College*, and documented in college *Individual Support Plan (ISP)*.
- ▶ poor handwriting resulting in a diagnosed & documented impairment NOT a deficit of writing skills.

Allocating word processors

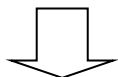
Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be **allocated** by the Exams Team for 'on demand' and formal examinations only in liaison with the nominated SENCo and the Exams Officer.

Mock exams, in class tests and assessments are not provided for, although guidance and advice can be sought from the nominated SENCo.

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 published start time. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 2.11 of ICE. OR, the nominated SENCo, Additional Needs Manager and the Exams Officer will determine those candidates who are to be prioritised.

Access Arrangements for Exams Application and Approval Process

**AA Initially Identified
at interview
(Pre-entry)**



**Approval for AA
Requested
(on Programme)**

AA for exams are discussed and reported at interview of candidate.

Checks are made to ensure AA are appropriate for the identified learning difficulty/disability, as set by exam board/validating body and AARA JQC regulations.

Documentary evidence is sent to nominated SENCo, e.g.

- Signed Personal Data Consent form
- Short Concise File Note or Detailed File Note
- Front Cover sheet of Access Arrangements for Exams
- Evidence of Need documentation

Additional evidence will be sought from Solihull College's Specialised Assessors (standardised scores from assessment) or referred back to the Additional Need Support Tutors if non-compliant.

A Short Concise/Detailed Centre Note will be attached to requests where appropriate i.e., to support EHCPs or medical evidence.

**(Transferring AA between
exam subjects is not permitted
- approval for each subject has
to be applied for)**

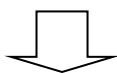
Nominated SENCo processes documentary evidence with request for approval to exam board/validating body via the Exams Officer and team

AA for Exams requests cannot be completed unless the request is received within time guidelines stated by the relevant exam board/validating body. The College/University Centre must adhere to these time guidelines

AA Approved

Exams Officer reports approval on ProSolution, which informs nominated SENCo, Support Tutors and teaching staff.

All approvals are recorded on the ProSolution individual Student Profiles.



AA Implemented

Readers/Scribes and other support is assigned by nominated SENCo for planned exams.

The Exams team confirm arrangements of rooming, equipment etc. to individual candidates.