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WORD PROCESSING POLICY (EXAMS)

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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 and Instructions for Conducting Examinations publications.

Introduction

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

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.

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.

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 must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School complies with AA (chapter 4) Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties and (chapter 5.8) Word processor when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in his/her exams.

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 normal way of working for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams unless there are exceptions.

Exceptions

A candidate may be awarded the use of a word processor in examinations where:

- The candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology
- The candidate 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 centre will:

- Allocate the use of a word processors to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) where it is their normal way of working within the centre
- 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
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained
 - not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question
 - consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification
 - 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.
 - provide the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification

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

Additionally, the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate:

- 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
- where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

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, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise
- (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
- ensures the candidate is reminded to ensure that his/her 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 such circumstances once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off his/her typed script, he/she is instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that he/she is 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
- ensures the candidate is reminded to save his/her work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'auto save' on each laptop/tablet) to ensure that in the event of a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing to make marking easier for examiners

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 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), email, the internet, social media sites, spreadsheets
- 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 computer reader
- 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

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

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 her 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, he/she is instructed to handwrite the details as a header or footer: the candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that he/she is solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way

The centre will also 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)

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 file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body.

Allocating word processors at the time of the assessment

An example, by way of illustration, is provided below. However, this is an example **only** which if used **must** be adapted to record your centre-specific processes

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.]