Word Processor Policy: Exams

Magna Academy

Approved by Regional Board:		**Date:** November 2024
Last reviewed on:	September 2026	
Next review due by:	September 2027	

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 2026/2027* and ICE to JCQ ***Instructions for conducting examinations*** *2026/2027*.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how the Magna Academy administers the use of word processors (including laptops, Chrome books and tablets) in examinations and assessments.

Principles for using a word processor

Magna Academy complies with AA chapter 4 *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* regulations and guidance as follows:

- The SENDCo will ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage a candidate. *AA4.2.1*
- The candidate will have appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination. *AA4.2.7*
- Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties
- Does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home
- The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate
- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question
- Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis
- The use of a word processor is considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course. Candidates are subsequently aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and controlled assessments/coursework
- Candidates are made aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments/coursework)

- The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:
    - in the classroom; or
    - working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
    - support lessons; or
    - intervention strategies; and/or
    - in internal school tests and mock examinations

The only exception to this is where an arrangement may need to be put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment at the time of an exam or assessment.

The use of a word processor

Magna Academy complies with AA chapter 5 *Access arrangements available* as follows:

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off), unless if specifically required and assessed
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs (for example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand)

  (The above also extends to the use of electronic braillers and tablets)

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments or coursework) components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification
- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and hand write shorter answers
- Are also aware that 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. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen
- Ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4, if applicable) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script where required
- Ensures in Functional Skills English (Reading and Writing components) the use of a word processor with the spell check facility switched on is permitted for all candidates

A word processor cannot be granted because a student wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.

Word processors and their programmes

Magna Academy complies with ICE 14.25 *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 any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- 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

Magna Academy further complies with ICE 14.21 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 front page
- 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:

- One of the Access Arrangement rooms with other students with similar needs

Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors include the following:

- One additional invigilator responsible for the candidates using laptops (An invigilator responsible for the candidates using laptops)