Southfields Academy

Word Processor Policy (Examinations)

2026-2027

Policy review date: 04/09/2027

Introduction

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually in conjunction with the updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications; Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AA) and Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE). There is no requirement to process an application using Access Arrangements Online (AAO) or to record the use of an arrangement. No evidence is needed to support the Arrangements (AA 5.8).

Purpose of the Policy

This policy details how the Academy manages and administers the use of word processors including laptops and tablets in examinations, assessments, tests and pupil's normal practice in examinations. The Academy will allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.8.1) and award the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs. The necessary steps will be taken to ensure that the grammar and spell check function on all word processors is disabled.

An awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet to be completed (AA5.8.4). This policy details how the Academy complies with Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments awarding and allocating a candidate the use of a word processor in his/her exams.

Principles for using a Word Processor

The purpose of an access arrangement 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 persistent and significant difficulties (AA 4.2.1). Students at Southfields Academy have access to the use of a word processor when it is demonstrated that the quality of their language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand. If this is the student's normal way of working at Southfields Academy they may be granted the use of a word processor within the Academy where there is a significant amount of writing such as in English, History and Politics.

Students Southfields Academy may consider would benefit from the use of a word processor where it would significantly improve the quality of their language include for examples that with (AA5.8.4):

- A learning difficulty which has 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
- Slow handwriting that would typically qualify for extra time but with the use of a word processor, if this is their normal way of working, would no longer be required.

The use of a word processor (AA 5.8)

The use of a word processor in examinations cannot be granted to a candidate simply because they would rather type than write in examinations, or because they can work faster on a keyboard, or that

they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working at the Academy. Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in all subjects, as their methods of assessments may vary (AA4.2.3). The use of a word processor will be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

The Academy will build a picture of the needs of students during their first year at the Academy to establish their normal way of working, such as the use of a word processor for extended writing during lessons, small group work, examinations and mocks, for example. The use of a word processor in non-examination assessment components (for example controlled assessments or coursework components) will be considered standard practice unless it is prohibited by the specification.

Students using a word processor at Southfields Academy as their normal way of working for extended writing will have the spelling and grammar check/ predictive text disabled.

The use of a word processor at Southfields Academy does not allow the students to have extra time. An application for extra time can be applied for if it is judged that the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties in interpreting questions and formulating their typed answers meet the published criteria for extra time, and an approved application has been made.

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 should be applied for as soon as is practicable (AA 4.2.4)

It is essential that the integrity of the examination is maintained whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for disabled candidates (AA 4.2.1). The use of a word processor cannot be granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)

Word Processors and Their Programs

The Academy complies with ICE pg. 39-40 - word processors instructions by ensuring:

- Word processors are used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software in acceptable
- Word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data
- 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 processor are accommodated in such a way that the 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. If they are not, 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 calculators (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc. when using a word processor
- Graphic packages or computer-aided design software are 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 must not have access to any AI tools
- Word processor are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidates has permission to use a scribe

Accommodating Word Processors in Examinations

Candidates using word processors are internally accommodated in the following manner:

- Where possible students using word processors will be housed in the main exam hall at the side of the room so they cannot be overlooked by other candidates. If this is not possible then they will be housed together in a smaller room within school invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors.
- When housed in a separate exam room from the main cohort the invigilator will be informed of the processes involved. ICT Technicians will be available to assist at the end of the exam to ensure scripts are printed off correctly with students still present to handover to the Lead invigilator to send off to the exam board with the rest of the cohort's completed papers. Other arrangements relating to the use of work processors include:
- If the Awarding body requires, a cover sheet will be handed over to the invigilator at the beginning of each exam for each student using a word processor.

Word Processors Use in Examinations

The Academy ensures that it complies with the JCQ ICE booklet in relation to the use of word processors. Candidates are reminded to ensure that the Academy's centre number, their candidate number and the unit/component code for the specification appears on each page of their document as a header. Candidates are also informed that they must number each page appropriately, use a minimum font size of 12, and ensure that their work has been double-spaced in order to assist examiners when marking. Invigilators are directed to remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals, in addition to the auto save feature that is set up on each laptop.