

St Matthew Academy

WORD PROCESSOR

(EXAMS)

2026/2027

Policy



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Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Mr J Potter
SENCo	Ms S Williams
Exams officer	Ms G Williams
Exams officer line manager (Senior Leader with oversight of exams administration)	Ms V Dunne
Senior Leaders	Mr J Charlery
IT manager	RM Unify

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 **JCQ publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2024-2025** and **Instructions for conducting examinations 2024-2025**.

Introduction

The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement/reasonable adjustment. The following principles are applied to access arrangements/reasonable adjustments at St Matthew Academy:

- 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 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. (AA 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.
- Although access arrangements/reasonable adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they are not granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question. (AA 4.2.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangement/reasonable adjustment 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. (AA 4.2.3)
- The SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate. (AA 4.2.1)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before his/her first examination. (AA 4.2.7)

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how St Matthew Academy complies with AARA (chapter 4) **Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres**, (section 5.8) **Word processor and ICE** (sections 14.20-27) Word processors (computers, laptops and tablets) 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 criteria St Matthew Academy uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments

The 'normal way of working' for examination candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their examinations 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 candidate has an injury that prevents them handwriting their examinations and provides medical evidence to substantiate this

St Matthew Academy will:

- Allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text switched off where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.8.1)
- 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 (AA 5.8.4)

- Only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AA 4.2.1)
- Not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)
- Consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification (AA 4.2.3)
- 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 (AA 4.2.4)
- Provide to the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)

St Matthew Academy will not:

- Simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home (AA 5.8.4)

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 (AA 4.2.4)
- Where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates (AA 5.8.4)

Other centre specific information relating to the use of a word processor.

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

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in a designated exam room, with candidates who have similar needs, assigned by the SENCo and Exams Officer prior to the exam on a case by case basis.

In the case of on screen testing where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically or controlled assessments, candidates will be:

- Seated in a computer room
- At least one seat will be between candidates - dividers will be used where this is not possible

In compliance with the regulations, St Matthew Academy:

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text 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 the word processor before the candidate's exam 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 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 (ICE 14.22)

If a candidate is using a software application that does not allow for the insertion of a header or footer, 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 (ICE 14.22)

- 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 his/her work at regular intervals to that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost (ICE14.24)
- Instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing to assist examiners when marking (ICE 14.24)

St Matthew Academy will ensure the word processor (ICE 14.25):

- Is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- Ensure the word processor is not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- 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
- 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, 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 (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 sheet must be completed)
- Is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe sheet must be completed)

Portable storage medium

St Matthew Academy will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used: (ICE 14.25)

- Is provided by the centre
- Is cleared of any previously stored data

Printing the script after the exam has ended

St Matthew Academy will ensure that:

(ICE 14.25)

- 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 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 (ICE 14.22)

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). (ICE 14.26)

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)

Allocating word processors at the time of the assessment

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be provided by the IT department in liaison with the 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 ICE 7.]