

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

2025/26

Policy approved by	
Silvana D'Apollo, Director of MIS	
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Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Hushna Utim (Student Inclusion Manager) Rona Hassan (Access Arrangements Coordinator)
Exams Officer	Prabh Salaman (Examinations Manager) Aarti Patel (Deputy Examinations Manager) Venetia Pantella Louise Mackay-Grant Hajar El Guerch Tracy Hacker Alison Clark Naeema Mumtaz Sophie Anastasiou
Senior leader(s)	Neil Coker (Head of Centre) Victoria Cornwell-Lyon Silvana D'Apollo
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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 AARA and ICE relate to/are directly taken from the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025-2026 and Instructions for conducting examinations 2025-2026 publications.

Introduction

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

(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 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 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 in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. SENCos (or equivalent role) **must** consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.1)

The SENCo, or equivalent role **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

(AA 4.2.7)

The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Barnet and Southgate College complies with AA chapter 4 (Managing the needs of candidates - principles for centres), 5.8 (Word processor) and ICE (14.20-27) 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.

Use of a word processor

A word processor cannot be granted to a candidate for the following reasons:

- due to personal preference to type rather than write
- where handwriting is illegible
- where they can work faster using a keyboard
- where they use a laptop or computer at home

If after assessment, it is considered an appropriate access arrangement and is the student's normal way of working from the beginning of the academic year, a word processor will be allowed for examinations as per JCQ regulations 2025-26:

- Where the integrity of the assessment or the assessment objectives of the specification in question will not be compromised.
- Considered on a subject-to-subject basis if the candidate needs to use a word processor for each specification.
- The needs of the candidate will be considered at the start of the course leading to a qualification, based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the candidate's needs and 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests/exams, mocks exams, etc. and confirm arrangements in place before the candidate sits an exam or assessment.
- Provided to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification

The criteria Barnet and Southgate College uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments

- The candidate has a firmly established need at the beginning of the course
- It reflects the candidate's normal way of working in the centre
- By not being allowed a word processor, the candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage compared to other candidates
- the candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology

And may include where a candidate has, for example:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- Poor and illegible handwriting

Additional circumstances where the use of a word processor may be considered for a candidate, would be:

- 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 a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

The centre 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 the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)

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 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)

Further arrangements for use of a word processor

- Teaching staff will be responsible to ensure that if the learner is to be granted this arrangement, the learner has access to a word processor in any controlled assessment or assignment in class. The learner should also be given this option in lessons
- Word processors for the day of the exam must be arranged by curriculum staff, liaising with the IT and the Examinations Department. The IT department will produce specific logins that block access to the Internet or word functions. The Examinations Department must ensure that spell/grammar check features are disabled unless allowed by a specific subject and awarding body.
- The use of a word processor for a formal exam must be approved and agreed with the exams department and the student following an assessment conducted by the Exam Access Arrangements Officer.

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

A candidate using a word processor is in a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs.

In compliance with the regulations the centre:

- provides a word processor, with the spelling and grammar check and 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 a laptop or tablet before the candidate's exam(s) to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged to last for the entire duration of the exam (ICE 14.21)
- ensures the candidate is reminded to ensure that their centre number, candidate number and the unit or 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 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 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

- 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 their work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop or tablet to ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost) (ICE 14.24)
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing to make marking easier for examiners (ICE 14.24)

(ICE 14.25)

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 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 or 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 cover sheet must be completed)
- does not include AI tools
- 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)

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)