WORD PROCESSING POLICY FOR EXAMINATIONS

Belfast High School

Introduction
The use of a word processor in examinations with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text switched off is a school-delegated access arrangement.

This policy was developed using JCQ's 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' (AARA) and 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE)' documents. Both documents set out the regulations and guidance that schools must adhere to when making access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties, to remove the barriers that they may experience when trying to access an assessment.

Purpose of the Policy
This policy details how the School manages and administers the use of word processors including laptops and tablets in examinations, assessments, and tests.

Pupils with access to word processors are allowed to type in order to ensure, where possible, barriers to assessment are removed for candidates which would otherwise place them at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties (AARA, 4.2.1).

The use of a word processor is considered and agreed, where appropriate, at the start of the course and is based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes:

- a candidate's needs;
- the 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests, exams, mock exams etc.;
- arrangements are in place before the candidate takes an exam or assessment (AARA, 4.2.4).

Word Processing in Written Examinations
The School will allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate, as an access arrangement, for the purpose of an assessment where it is their normal way of working and appropriate to their needs within the School; unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (AARA, 5.8.1; ICE, 14.20).

Word processors will only be permitted where the integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a pupil.

Pupils may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands on the pupil. The LSC will consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis (AARA, 4.2.3).

Pupils who may benefit from the use of a word processor during written examinations
The School considers that pupils with one or more of the following needs may benefit from the use of a word processer during examinations (AARA 5.8.4):

- 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 handwriting.

The use of a word processor is granted for pupils only if it is appropriate to their needs and reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working' (AARA, 4.2.5), which may include support:

- in the classroom;
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- support lessons;
- literacy intervention strategies;
- in internal school test/examinations and mock examinations; or
- mock examinations.

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/reasonable adjustments should be applied for as soon as is practicable (AARA 4.2.4).

The Use of a Word Processor

Belfast High School:

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) for candidates where it is their normal way of working (AARA 5.8.1);
- only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs eg 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 (AARA 5.8.1)

  The need will be considered by the Learning Support Coordinator, who will review:

  - evidence of persistent and significant difficulties, which would usually, though not exclusively, have been identified during Key Stage 3;
  - evidence from teachers that this difficulty impacts on teaching and learning in the classroom; and
  - evidence that the access arrangement is the student's normal way of working in school. This means they have routinely been using a word processor for class work for at least the last 6 months.

    (The above could also extend to the use of electronic braillers and tablets in order to remove barriers which place a disabled candidate at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.)

- provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components (including controlled assessments or coursework) as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AARA 5.8.2);
- allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions i.e. those requiring extended writing, and to hand-write shorter answers (AARA 5.8.3);
- is also aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place 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 hand-write within the answer booklet. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen (AARA 5.8.3);
- 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 (AARA 5.8.4).

An awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet to be completed and included with each candidate's typed script (AARA 5.8.4).

Word Processors and Their Programs
Belfast High School complies with JCQ's Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) document (14.25) by ensuring that word processors **are**:

- used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;
- have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must be any portable storage medium used;
- in good working order at the time of the examination;
- 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);
- either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium; and
- 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;
- connected to an intranet or any other means of communication;
- used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe; and
- to include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader.

Other Arrangements for Using a Word Processor
During a written examination:

- candidates are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc;
- graphic packages or computer-aided design software are not included unless permission has been given for the candidate 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; and
- voice recognition technology is not included unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software.

Laptops and Tablets
Tablets used during examinations/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'free-standing'.

The School complies with JCQ's Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE) document (14.21) by ensuring that:

- the battery capacity of all laptops and/or tablets is checked before the candidate' examination(s) with the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination; and

- 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.

Instructions for Candidates

The School complies with JCQ's [Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#) (ICE) document (14.22-14.23) by ensuring that candidates are:

- reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer;
- instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer (if using Notepad or Wordpad software which does not allow for the insertion of 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;
- instructed to appropriately number each page; and
- instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing.

Invigilators

Invigilators will remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals. Alternatively, an IT technician can set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet. This will ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost (ICE, 14.24).

Accommodating Word Processors in Examinations

Candidates using word processors (including laptops or tablets) are internally accommodated in the following manner:

- Where possible, students using word processors will be housed in the main exam hall at the rear 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 include the following:

- When housed within the main exam hall invigilators will be made aware of students using word processors and 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 cohorts completed papers.
- When housed in a separate exam room from the main cohort the invigilator will be informed of the processes involved. An ICT Technician 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 cohorts completed papers.

Portable storage medium

The School will ensure that any portable storage medium (eg a memory stick) used:

- is provided by the centre; and
- is cleared of any previously stored data.

Other Arrangements

Other arrangements relating to the use of word processors include:

- A JCQ Form 4 will be handed over to the invigilator at the beginning of each exam for each student using a word processor.

Printing the Script

After the exam is over, the School 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; and
- a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with the candidate's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions).

Retaining an Electronic Copy

Centres may retain electronic copies of word-processed scripts. 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 (ICE, 14.27).