



BALLYMENA ACADEMY

**POLICY STATEMENT
IN RELATION TO
USE OF WORD PROCESSORS
IN EXAMINATIONS**

2021/2022

**Approved at June, 2021
B of G meeting**

Introduction

This policy details the rationale for the use of word processors in examinations and assessments, as an integral part of a student's normal way of working. The policy is reviewed annually in line with the most recent publication of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations and guidance contained in the publications "Access Arrangements" (AA)

(https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/AA_regs_20-21_FINAL.pdf) and "Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for Conducting Examinations" (ICE) (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations>)

The key staff involved in the allocation and provision of word processors for examinations:

Mrs. C. McNeilly – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)
Mr. G. Murray - Examinations Officer
Mr. M. Campbell - ICT Technician

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how the centre manages and allocates the use of word processors (including laptops and tablets) in examinations and assessments.

Ballymena Academy cannot simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because the candidate prefers to type rather than write, or can work faster on a keyboard, or because the candidate uses such a digital device at home.

Principles for provision of a word processor

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

(AA 4.2.1)

- 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.
- 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.

(AA 4.2.2)

- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

(AA 4.2.3)

- Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to variation in the demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.4)

- 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, where appropriate, for examinations and controlled assessments/ coursework.

(AA 4.2.5)

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;
- during internal tests and examinations;
- in mock examinations;
- during literacy individual or small group support;

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 examination or assessment.

The use of a word processor

Ballymena Academy complies with JCQ *AA chapter 5, Access arrangements*, as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off).
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) 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 brailers and tablets.)

(AA 5.8.2)

- 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.

(AA 5.8.3)

- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite 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.

(AA 5.8.4)

- In all cases, ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script.

Word processors and their programmes

Ballymena Academy complies with JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE)*, section 8.8 on *Word processors* 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 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 are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

Laptops and tablets

Ballymena Academy further complies with *ICE 8.8 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 each page as a header or footer
- 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:

- Where possible students using word processors will be housed in the main examination 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 the school.

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

- When housed within the main examination hall, invigilators will be made aware of students using word processors and will be informed of the processes involved. The SENCo or Examinations Officer will be available to assist at the end of the examination to ensure scripts are printed off correctly, with students still present, to handover to the Lead Invigilator to send off to the examination board, with the rest of the cohorts completed papers.
- When housed in a separate examination room from the main cohort the invigilator will be informed of the processes involved. The SENCo or Examinations Officer will be available to assist at the end of the examination to ensure scripts are printed off correctly, with students still present, to handover to the Lead Invigilator to send off to the examination board with the rest of the cohorts completed papers.

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 examination for each candidate using a word processor.

This Policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if JCQ regulations change in relation to the provision of word processors, as a student's normal way of working.