St John Fisher Catholic College

Word Processor Policy

Date: February 2026

Adopted: February 2026

Reviewed: January 2027

Key staff involved in awarding and allocating word processors for exams

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	**H Hodges**
Exams officer	**A Scott**
SLT member(s)	**G Murray, K Wildman, C Hawthorne, J Rogers, C Teague, H Hodges**
IT manager	**M Holmes**

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 Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025-2026 (https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Print-JCQ-AARA-2025_6-FINAL.pdf)

And Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2025-2026 (https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Print-version-JCQ-Instructions-for-conducting-examinations-2025_6_FINAL.pdf) publications.

1 Introduction

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

1.2 (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.

1.3 (AA 4.2.2)
Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

1.4 (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 must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

2 Purpose of the policy

2.1 This policy details how St John Fisher Catholic College complies with AA (chapter 4) Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties and (chapter 5.8) Word processor when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in his/her exams.

The term ‘word processor’ is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet.

3 The use of a word processor

3.1 The centre will

- provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text switched off where it is the candidate’s normal way of working within the centre. (AA 5.8.1)

- award the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs

Needs may include

  - 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 (AA 5.8.4)

    This list is not exhaustive.

- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate. (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 applications at the start of or during the first year of a two-year GCSE course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working during Years 7 to 9 and confirm arrangements in place before the candidate takes an exam or assessment (AA 4.2.4)
- provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)

3.2 The centre will 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 (AA 5.8.4)

4 Exceptions

The only exceptions to the above where the use of a word processor would 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 (AA 4.2.4)
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates (AA 5.8.4)

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

5.1 A candidate using a word processor is usually accommodated with the main cohort unless they receive additional access arrangements.

In compliance with the regulations the centre:

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20)
- checks the battery capacity of the word processor, or tablet, 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 the software application Notepad or Wordpad these do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer. In such circumstances once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off his/her typed script, he/she is instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that he/she is 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 his/her work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet)
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking (ICE 14.24)

5.2 (ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure the word processor:

- is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;
- has been cleared of any previously stored data, as has any portable storage medium used. An unauthorised memory stick will not be used by a candidate. When needed, the centre will provide a memory stick, which is cleared of any previously stored data, to the candidate;
- is in good working order at the time of the examination;
- is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen.
- 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.

- is used to produce work under secure conditions, otherwise the candidate's script may not be accepted;
- will not be used to perform skills which are being assessed;
- will not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), email, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets;
- will not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these;
- Will 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;
- Will not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader;
- Will not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet will be completed);
- Will not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet will be completed).
- Will not include AI tools.

6 Portable storage medium

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

7 Printing the script after the exam is over

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 his or her own
- a word processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- 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)

Appendix 1

The criteria St John Fisher Catholic College uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

The use of word processors

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded/allocated the use of a word processor in exams where he/she 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.

Needs might include where a candidate has, for example:

- 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

The only exception to the above where the use of a word processor may be considered for a candidate would be

- on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury at the time of the assessment
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

Arrangements for the use of 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. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 7 of ICE.

Statement produced by: **H Hodges, SENCo** Statement date: **February 2026**