

Bishop Challoner Catholic College

Exam Access Word Processor Policy

Introduction

This policy has been written with reference to

- the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'
- JCQ 'Instructions for conducting examinations 2022/23.'

This policy should be read in conjunction with Bishop Challoner's Exam Access Policy and SEND Policy.

This policy has been updated by the new SENCO (Rachel Wheeler) who has a Postgraduate Diploma (equivalent to level 7) in Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia), with AMBDA status (University College London), in consultation with the school's Exam Officer (Lorraine Houldcroft-Flint) and the Assistant Principal (Lucy Choudhury).

Principles for using a word processor

A word processor may be used in an examination where the requirement for handwriting would place a candidate at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. A candidate may have:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
- a medical condition;
- a physical disability (such as dyspraxia, joint hypermobility or cerebral palsy which limits their ability to handwrite, in which case a report by an appropriately qualified professional should be provided);
- a sensory impairment;
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand;
- poor handwriting.

This list is not exhaustive.

Candidates requiring the use of a word processor in examinations will have a history of handwriting difficulties which are persistent and obvious in their school work. They will regularly use a word processor to complete written assignments and they will be able to demonstrate that their typing is efficient, accurate and of sufficient speed. The use of a word processor is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working.'

The use of a word processor should be agreed at the start of the course. Candidates must be made aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations, controlled assessments and coursework and use them for this purpose.

It is important to consider the use of technology to a much greater extent instead of readers and scribes. Computer readers, examination reading pens, speech recognition technology and word processors not only allow candidates to work independently but are also a better preparation for Further and Higher Education and the world of employment.

The criteria Bishop Challoner Catholic College uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations

Examples (taken from JCQ 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022/23')

- A candidate who cannot write legibly because she has significant learning difficulties asks to use a word processor in her examinations. It is her normal means of producing written work within the centre because her teachers cannot read her writing. She is very proficient in using a word processor. The SENCo allows her to use a word processor in her examinations.

- A candidate does not have a learning difficulty but is a 'messy' writer. His handwriting is hard to decipher. He requests the use of a word processor. This is granted by the SENCo because it reflects his normal way of working within the centre.

- A candidate wishes to use a word processor since this is her normal way of working within the centre. However, the candidate additionally wishes to use the spelling and grammar check facility. Given that she does not meet the published criteria for a scribe, the candidate cannot use the spelling and grammar check facility. The SENCo allows her to use a word processor in line with the regulations as set out in the JCQ 'ICE' booklet.

- A candidate who has significant learning difficulties has quite legible writing. However, he makes many omissions and cannot order his ideas correctly. His written scripts are legible but covered in crossings-out and omission marks. He requests a word processor and this is granted by the SENCo. The use of a word processor allows him to correct text, sequence his answers and reflects his normal way of working within the centre.

- A blind candidate asks to use a word processor in his examinations. He also requests the use of a screen reader to allow him to 'read' back and check the answers he has typed. These arrangements are permitted when using a word processor in his examinations. However, if the candidate also wants to use predictive text and/or the spelling and grammar check facility he must meet the published criteria for a scribe, with an approved application in place.

Examples - Word processor and 25% extra time (taken from JCQ 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022/23')

- A candidate has a below average free writing speed when handwriting and qualifies for 25% extra time. However, using a word processor is her normal way of working within the centre. When typing she can produce her written work effectively. The SENCo awards the use of a word processor as it removes the barrier presented by her slow handwriting. The SENCo will consider whether 25% extra time is required when she

writes by hand such as in GCSE Mathematics and Science examinations. The candidate's cognitive processing will need to be assessed as she will require two below average standardised scores or one below average standardised score and one low average standardised score to be awarded 25% extra time.

- A candidate with significant learning difficulties has a below average speed of writing and below average scores in areas of cognitive processing and reading speed. As using a word processor is his normal way of working within the centre, he has been able to improve his typing speed to match the equivalent average writing rate. However, he has persistent and significant difficulties in interpreting questions and formulating his typed answers. He is given 25% extra time, as well as the use of a word processor, as both arrangements are appropriate to his needs

The use of a word processor

The use of a word processor will only be granted to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre and if it is appropriate to their needs (e.g. the quality of language improves significantly as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand).

For those who are eligible, the use of word processors for controlled assessments and coursework will be considered standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

Word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions, if not they may be refused by the awarding body. Word processors must have been cleared of any previously stored data and are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication. A word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled will be provided for eligible candidates.

A word processor will be fully charged in advance of the examination. The battery capacity will always be checked. It will be checked that the word processor is in good working order.

Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in all examinations and it is permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions (i.e. those requiring extended writing) and to handwrite shorter answers. Word processed scripts are attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers.

Candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer. Each page of a typed script must be appropriately numbered. Candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing. Invigilators will remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals.

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. Documents are printed after the examination is over and when candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own.

Candidates are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished the examination and printed off their typed script if they have not already typed this information into the document. They are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not rereading their answers or amending their work in any way.

A word processor cover sheet may be needed if required by an awarding body.

Word Processors and their programmes

Word processors are used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is allowed. Candidates are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination) when using a word processor. Graphic packages or computer aided design software is not included on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these.

Predictive text software and automatic spelling and grammar check are switched off unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe, or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a scribe cover sheet attached), 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 to perform skills which are being assessed and word processors are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

Accommodating word processors in examinations

Accommodation will be as appropriate for an exam. A number of candidates may be roomed together if they are all using a word processor. Appropriate invigilation will be provided.

Rachel Wheeler

1st October 2022