



**Wallington**  
County Grammar School

# WCGS Policy for the Use of Word Processors in Public Examinations

**Policy Area**

School Document

**Author**

SENCO

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## **Introduction**

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) and [Instructions for conducting examinations](#).

References to 'AA' relate to JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 5.8.4, 2025-2026* and ICE to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE) 2025-2026*.

[https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/JCQ-AARA-2025\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/JCQ-AARA-2025_FINAL.pdf)

[https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/JCQ-Instructions-for-conducting-examinations-2025\\_6\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/JCQ-Instructions-for-conducting-examinations-2025_6_FINAL.pdf)

## **Purpose of the policy**

This policy details how WCGS administers the use of word processors (including laptops and tablets) in examinations and assessments.

## **Principles for using a word processor**

WCGS complies with AA chapter-5

[https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/JCQ-AARA-2025\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/JCQ-AARA-2025_FINAL.pdf)

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 (where appropriate); or
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
- literacy support lessons; or
- literacy intervention strategies; and/or
- in internal school tests/examinations
- mock examinations

The only exceptions to the above would be 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.

## **Centre specific processes**

In our experience, the use of a word processor may benefit certain types of candidates. 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.

## **Word processors and their programmes**

WCGS complies with the ICE 14.20 *Word processors* instructions (link above) 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/attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers (and according to instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- 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 is 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

## **Centre specific processes**

The use of a word processor in controlled assessment or coursework components is considered usual practice unless the course prohibits it.

## **Laptops and tablets**

WCGS further complies with the ICE 14.20 instructions by ensuring:

- Laptops are always plugged in, never run on battery.
- Laptop users always sit in a smaller venue rather than larger venues where power points are limited.
- 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.

## **Accommodating word processors in examinations**

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

Students using word processors in exams can decide themselves whether to type those answers which require extended writing or to handwrite shorter ones. Where candidates use both methods in the same exam, the typed script and handwritten answer booklets must be attached together for marking.

Word processor users must also remember to follow certain protocols:

- to name and save work regularly during the exam to a designated area on the laptop
- to use a 12pt font whilst double-spacing their answers
- to number all pages
- to put the centre number, candidate number and paper reference on each page
- to save the final version to a designated area on the laptop
- to copy the final version to a clean memory stick, provided by the exams department
- to verify the printed work is theirs in the presence of the exams officer after the exam

It is therefore strongly recommended that students familiarise themselves with these protocols in lessons and in all internal exams so that they become proficient in using the word processor.

### **The criteria WCGS 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.

#### **Awarding word processors**

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be **awarded** 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.

Exceptions 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

#### **Allocating word processors**

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be **allocated** by the Exams Officer after liaising with the SENCo . In exceptional circumstances where the number of appropriate word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session, the cohort will be split into two groups. One group will sit the exam earlier than or later than the published start time. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 7.3 of ICE.