



THE
PORTSMOUTH
GRAMMAR
SCHOOL

The PGS Word Processing for Access Arrangements Policy

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 2023-24](#) and [Instructions for conducting examinations 2023-2024](#). At The Portsmouth Grammar School candidates who require a word processor for their examinations are provided with desktop computers which comply with JCQ regulations:

“Centres are allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre.”¹

The final decision with regards to the awarding and allocating of word processor usage in examinations rests with the School’s SENCO.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how the School manages and administers the use of word processors in examinations and assessments.

Principles for using a Word Processor as an available access arrangement and reasonable adjustment where it is the candidate’s existing normal way of working

1. The use of a word processor will not be granted to a candidate simply because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop as part of their learning either at home or at school.
2. The use of word processors is only allowed in order to remove barriers for candidates who would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. This judgement will be made by the SENCO.
3. 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 candidates (see also point 10 below).
4. The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
5. Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in all specifications. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands on candidates, the SENCO must consider the need for the use of a word processor on a subject-by-subject basis (see Note 1 above).
6. Except in rare circumstances, the use of a word processor should be considered and agreed where appropriate as near to the start of an exam course as possible.
7. The SENCO must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage a candidate.

¹ (https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/AA_regs_23-24_FINAL-2.pdf (Section 5.8.1, page 58)

8. The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise, under timed conditions, using the access arrangement(s), and the specific word processing software used in the exams, before their first examination.
9. 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:
 - 9.1 in the classroom when completing exam-style assessments (e.g. past paper questions), including under timed conditions where appropriate; **and**
 - 9.2 in internal school tests and mock examinations.
 - 9.3 The only exception to this is where an arrangement may need to be put in place by the SENCO as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment at the time of an exam or assessment.
10. Particular types of candidates may benefit from using a word processor, for example a candidate with:
 - 10.1 a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly.
 - 10.2 a medical condition.
 - 10.3 a physical disability.
 - 10.4 a sensory impairment.
 - 10.5 notably poor handwriting.

(this list is not exhaustive)

It is our policy that candidates must show proficiency in the use of a word processor before using it for examinations, except in the case of temporary injury or impairment at the time of the examination.

The use of a word processor

The school will:

1. make candidates aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments/coursework).
2. in the case of examinations, provide the facility to word process with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off).
3. only grant the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre (as defined above) and if it is appropriate to their needs (the above also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets).

4. provide access to word processing facilities to candidates in non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments or coursework) as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.
5. allow eligible candidates to use word processing facilities in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and hand write shorter answers (see Note 1 below).
6. in all cases, ensure that a word processor cover sheet ([JCQ Form 4](#) for AQA, Edexcel and OCR exams and [CAIE Form 4](#) for Cambridge exams) is completed if required by individual Exam boards and included with each candidate's typed script.
7. spell-check will only be enabled if permitted by the applicable JCQ regulations, the specification AND where the candidate is aware of any penalty applied, for example in the allocation of SPAG marks, should the spell-check function be enabled.

Note 1: We are 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 it is more likely that candidates will need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet thereby avoiding the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen.

Word processors and associated software

The Portsmouth Grammar School will ensure that:

1. computers for word processing are in good working order at the time of the examination.
2. candidates are instructed to name and save the file at the start and then save their work regularly throughout the exam (regular use of the *ctrl+S* shortcut is recommended).
3. word processor software is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable.
4. word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data.
5. the School's preferred word processing software for examinations is [ExamWritePad](#) and all desktops used will have this installed with the spellcheck and grammar check functions disabled. Work is automatically backed up every minute.
6. unauthorised memory sticks are not to be used by candidates.
7. if required, candidates are provided with a memory stick, which has been cleared of any previously stored data, by a nominated member of centre staff, usually the Head of Examinations/Deputy Head of Examinations. The preferred method of retention and printing of scripts is securely via the school cloud-based network as facilitated by IT Services.
8. word processors are accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read a neighbouring screen.

9. where a candidate using a word processing facility is accommodated separately, a separate invigilator is used.
10. computers used for word processing 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 (see also point 6 above).
11. documents are printed only after the examination is over and not before the end of a candidate's use of extra time (if relevant).
12. candidates are instructed that they should proofread their work on the screen before the end of the exam and before they print off their work.
13. candidates are present to verify that all pages are there, and the work printed is their own; candidates will sign each printed page as verification.
14. word processed scripts are inserted in any answer booklet which contains some of the answers. Other than OCR examinations, word-processed pages must be secured with a treasury tag.
15. computers used for word processing 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.
16. computers used for word processing are not used to perform skills which are being assessed.
17. computers used for word processing are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
18. candidates are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc. when using a computer for word processing.
19. graphic packages or computer aided design software is not included on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these.
20. 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.
21. voice recognition technology is not included on word processors unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software.
22. the use of Artificial Intelligence is prohibited (see the JCQ publication [*AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications*](#) for further detail - this is a guide for teachers and assessors, giving additional information about AI misuse, the risks of using this and how it will be treated as malpractice).
23. computers used for word processing are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.
24. it is the School's preference to train and develop candidates' use of computer scribe and reader software rather than relying on the presence of a third party in exams to assist with this.

At The Portsmouth Grammar School, we use the following scribe and reader software as appropriate and when it is a pupil's normal way of working:

- [Dragon Dictate](#) - computer scribe: candidates require separate invigilation
- [ClaroRead](#) – computer reader: candidates wear headphones so do not need to be seated in a separate room

At the end of the examination:

The Invigilator will remind candidates:

1. to insert their details as prompted by the software – i.e. Name, Candidate Number, Centre Number (58527) and the examination unit/component code.
2. that page numbers are added automatically so no need for them to enter these.
3. to use Calibri 12pt font and double line-spacing.

The Invigilator will either:

1. liaise with IT Services to print out the script.

or:

2. provide a laptop user with a memory stick to save his or her work. The candidate, together with the memory stick, is taken to the printer room by the Head of Examinations/Deputy Head of Examinations/Invigilator.

or:

3. ask a desktop user to print his or her work directly to the printer.

Once printed, the candidate is asked to check that all pages are printed and that the work printed is theirs and to sign the bottom of each page on the signature line.

With the exception of CAIE, exam boards are no longer asking for cover sheets to be attached but this is optional with some exam boards and should be double-checked before each exam season starts. Where required, these should be signed as appropriate and attached to the front of the word-processed pages with a treasury tag or inserted in the front of the answer book for OCR examinations. The relevant cover sheets are hyperlinked earlier in this policy.

A word-processed script should be placed inside an answer booklet which contains some handwritten answers. The details on the front of the answer booklet must be completed and the word-processed pages and cover sheet attached (if required) with a treasury tag inside the front cover of the answer booklet (for OCR examinations additional pages must not be attached but placed loosely inside the front cover).

The candidate is then allowed to leave and the word processor is cleared of all work by IT Services. CAIE advise that copies of candidates' work for their examinations should be saved securely on a USB stick or cloud-based drive storage.

The school may retain electronic copies of word-processed scripts as the electronic copy of a word processed script may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost. However, the

school 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)

Accommodating word processors in examinations

Candidates using computers for word processing are internally accommodated in the following manner:

1. Candidates take their exams in one of the school's IT suites or in a room specifically set up for word processors during the exam period
2. Where necessary additional space will be provided if required (e.g. candidate with broken arm or wrist; candidate with enlarged examination paper).

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

1. Invigilators will assist or summon help from the IT Services in the case of a technical fault.
2. Invigilators are instructed to record stop times for a word processor in the case of a technical fault and to adjust the candidate's finish time in such instances; candidates will be clearly informed of the new finish time.
3. Invigilators must follow the guidance provided by the Head of Exams and the Deputy Head of Exams, in liaison with the SENCO, when collating cover sheets, exam scripts and answer booklets at the end of the exam.

Other arrangements relating to the use of word processors include:

1. IT Services will ensure that all desktops are set-up and working properly, and check that all data is cleared, before the start of each exam.
2. IT Services will ensure that all printers are working in every room to be used that day and ensure that there is sufficient printer paper at all times.
3. With regard to CAIE examinations, IT Services will save all word-processed scripts to encrypted memory sticks which have been cleared of any previously stored data or secure cloud-based drive storage; the details of these examinations will be given to IT services by the Head of Exams/Deputy Head of Exams in advance of the examination period. These memory sticks would need to be retained in a secure location until the end of the enquiry about results period.

Associated documents

1. [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2023-2024](#) (JCQ)
2. [Instructions for conducting examinations 2023-2024](#) (JCQ)
3. The PGS Additional Educational Needs (AEN) and Disabilities Policy
4. Attaching Word Processing Cover Sheets and additional Answer Books /Continuation Sheets (Internal PGS exams document)

Allocation of Tasks and Version Control

Allocation of Tasks

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	Head of Exams and Head of LS/SENCO	As required, and at least annually
Monitoring the implementation of the policy, relevant risk assessments and any action taken in response and evaluating effectiveness	Head of Exams and Head of LS/SENCO	As required, and at least termly
Maintaining up to date records of all information created in relation to the policy and its implementation as required by the GDPR	Head of Exams and Head of LS/SENCO	As required, and at least termly
Reviewing / receiving input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, Parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy	Deputy Head (Academic & Staff Welfare)	As required, and at least annually
Formal annual review	Deputy Head (Academic & Staff Welfare)	Annually

Version Control

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Policy author (SMT)	Deputy Head (Academic)
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