

Exam Word Processor Policy

Clarity Independent School

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Clarity Independent School is committed to safeguarding...

"Our school is committed to our whole-school approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do, and underpins all systems, processes and policies...We promote an environment where children and young people feel empowered to raise concerns and report incidents and we work hard in partnership with pupils, parents and caregivers to keep children safe."

Clarity Safeguarding Policy September 2025

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Purpose of the policy	3
Word processors in examinations	4
The use of a word processor as an access arrangement.....	6
Arrangements at the Assessment Centre for the Use of a Word Processor	8
Word Processors and their Programmes	9
Centre specific processes	10

Introduction

This policy is for the use of word processors in examinations, assessments and tests and students' normal practice.

The use of a 'word processor' in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement/reasonable adjustment and can be permitted where evidence supports the need. There is not a requirement to process an application for a word processor using *Access arrangements online*. No evidence is needed to support the arrangement for inspection purposes. (This also applies where a candidate is using a word processor on a temporary basis because of a temporary injury.)

The policy is edited using the most recent publication of JCQ's regulations and guidance which is contained in the [JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments \(AARA\) \(2025-26\)](#) for conducting examinations. All schools must comply with these regulations.

References from this policy are taken directly from the AARA 2025-26 and [JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations \(2025-26\)](#), (also known as the ICE booklet).

For the purposes of this document, any reference to 'the school' will mean Clarity Independent School.

Purpose of the policy

All schools must have a policy on the use of word processors. This policy details how the school manages and administers the use of word processors including laptops and tablets in examinations, assessments, tests and pupil's normal practice in examinations. The school will allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AARA 5.8.1) and award the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs.

The use of a word processor with grammar and spell check switched off is a school delegated access arrangement. An awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet to be completed. (AARA 5.8.4)

This policy details how the school complies with AARA Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.8 Word Processor, when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in his/her exams.

Links to Other Policies

This policy is linked with:

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Process
- Student Recruitment, Identification, Registration and Certification Policy (exams)
- Examination Internal Appeals Policy
- Examination Contingency Plan
- Examinations Complaints and Appeals Procedure Policy
- Examinations Management Policy
- Assessment Procedures Policy
- Non-examination Written Controlled Assessment Policy
- Equality Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Whistleblowing Policy

Word processors in examinations

Portable storage media:

The centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (such as a memory stick) used:

- is provided by the centre
- is cleared of any previously stored data

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 exam room 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 school.
- If this is not possible, the candidate will be housed in a separate room away from other candidates.

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

- When housed within the main exam room, invigilators will be made aware of students using word processors and will be informed of the processes involved.
- ICT Technicians (or allocated members of staff with the relevant knowledge and skills required) will be available to assist at the end of the exam to ensure scripts are printed off correctly with students still present to handover to the Lead Invigilator to send off to the exam board with the rest of the cohorts completed papers.
- When housed in a separate exam room from the main cohort the invigilator will be informed of the processes involved. ICT Technicians/allocated staff will be available to assist at the end of the exam to ensure scripts are printed off correctly with students still present to handover to the Lead Invigilator to send off to the exam board with the rest of the cohorts completed papers.

Other arrangements relating to the use of word processors include:

- If the Awarding body requires, a cover sheet will be handed over to the invigilator at the beginning of each exam for each student using a word processor.

Printing the script after the exam is over:

The school 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, if required by the Awarding Body, is completed and included with the candidate's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions).
- An electronic copy of the word-processed script is retained. The electronic copy of a word-processed script may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost. However, the centre would need to demonstrate to the awarding body that the electronic file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body.

The use of a word processor as an access arrangement

(AARA 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 (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage because of persistent and significant difficulties.

Word processors will only be permitted where the integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

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

The school complies with AARA 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) where it is their normal way of working.
- 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 because of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand.

(The above could also extend to the use of electronic brailers and tablets).

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components (including controlled assessments or coursework) 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 to hand-write shorter answers.
- Is aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type.

(AARA 5.8.4)

- Does 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.

(AARA 5.5.5)

- The SENCo must produce a statement, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the use of a computer reader and/or a reader reflects his/her normal and current way of working within the centre.
- The SENCo must be satisfied that: the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant reading difficulties (the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act); and there is a genuine need for the arrangement.
- A computer reader/reader may be awarded on account of: cognition and learning needs; communication and interaction needs; a medical condition; sensory and physical needs; social, mental and emotional needs.

For Entry Level Certificate (ELC) qualifications, the SENCo must determine the need for a computer reader and/or a reader based on how the candidate normally works in the classroom. In Entry Level Certificate English, a reader is not permitted in the Reading component. A computer reader may be used in the Reading component of Entry Level Certificate English where its use reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. A candidate who would normally be eligible for a reader, but is not permitted this arrangement, may be granted up to a maximum of 50% extra time. The

need for 25% extra time alongside the use of a computer reader/reader should always be considered. If the candidate requires 25% extra time, then he/she must meet the published criteria for 25% extra time. The required evidence must be in place to support an online application

Arrangements at the Assessment Centre for the Use of a Word Processor

(AARA 4.2.4)

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course. Schools, for example, should be able to 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.

However, 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, access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be applied for as soon as is practicable. Centres must process applications as detailed in Chapter 8, section 8.3 using *Access arrangements online* where required.

Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment.

(AARA 4.2.5)

The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it is appropriate to their needs and reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:

- in the classroom
- in the examination room
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing
- literacy support lessons
- literacy intervention strategies
- in internal school test and mock examinations

Word Processors and their Programmes

Clarity Independent School complies with ICE page 39, 14.25. The centre will ensure that 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 must any portable storage medium used. An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate. When needed, the centre must 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. Where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated in another room, a separate invigilator will be required.
- 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. This must be done after the examination is over. The candidate must be present to verify that the work printed is his or her own. Word processed scripts must be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers.
- Is used to produce scripts under secure conditions, otherwise they may be refused.
- Is used to perform skills which are being assessed.
- Does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), email, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets.
- Does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these.
- Does not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking.
- Does not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader.
- Does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software.
- Does not include AI tools.
- Is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

To make marking easier for examiners, candidates should use a minimum font size of 12pt and double spacing.

Centre specific processes

Some students may benefit from the use of a word processor during some or all of their examinations. For example, candidates 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
- Poor handwriting
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand

This list is not exhaustive.

In all cases the use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's NORMAL WAY OF WORKING within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.

This policy will be reviewed annually in accordance with JCQ regulations. Overall responsibility for exam word processing in Clarity Independent School rests with the Headteacher, Debbie Hanson.