



exeter college

Use of Word Processors in Examinations Policy

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Next Review Date:	September 2022
Version:	December 2021



1 Purpose

The policy of Exeter College is to ensure that the current edition of the JCQ regulations and guidance for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments is correctly followed and applied in determining the use of word processors in examinations/assessments.

2 Definitions

2.1 Access Arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010* to make “reasonable adjustments”.

2.2 Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; and
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

The responsibility of an awarding body and a centre offering the examination is principally one of making reasonable adjustments for a candidate defined as disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010.

2.3 Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment.

2.4 The Equality Act 2010 definition of Disability

Generally, impairments have to meet the statutory requirements set out in section 6 and Schedule 1 to the Equality Act 2010 and associated regulations.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of Disability is usually considered cumulatively in terms of:

- identifying a physical or mental impairment;
- looking into adverse effects and assessing which are substantial;
- considering if substantial adverse effects are long term;
- judging the impact of long-term adverse effects on a normal day to day activities.

Statutory guidance on the Equality Act 2010 definition of Disability has been produced by the Office for Disability Issues (within the Department for Work and Pensions) to help better understand and apply this definition - <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wor/new/ea-guide.pdf>.

The clear starting point in the statutory guidance is that disability means '**limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people**'.

2.5 'Substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. Substantial adverse effects can be determined by looking at the effects on a person with the impairment, comparing those to a person without the impairment, to judge if the difference between the two is more than minor or trivial.

2.6 'Long term' means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months or is likely to do so.

'Normal day to day activities' could be determined by reference to the illustrative, non-exhaustive list of factors in pages 47 to 51 of the statutory guidance relating to the Equality Act 2010.

(Study and education-related activities are included in the meaning of 'day to day' activities.)

The guidance from the Office for Disability Issues referred to above illustrates the factors which might reasonably be regarded as having a substantial adverse effect on normal day to day activities. Factors that might reasonably be expected not to have a substantial adverse effect are also provided.

2.7 Factors that might reasonably be expected to have a substantial adverse effect include:

- Persistent and significant difficulty in reading and understanding wrote material where this is in the person's native language, for example, because of mental impairment, a learning difficulty or a sensory or multi-sensory impairment;
- Persistent distractibility or difficulty concentrating;
- Difficulty understanding or following simple verbal instructions;
- Physical impairment – for example, difficulty operating a computer because of physical restrictions in using a keyboard.

2.8 Factors that might reasonably be expected not to have a substantial adverse effect include:

- Minor problems with writing or spelling;
- Inability to read very small or indistinct print without the aid of a magnifying glass;
- Inability to converse orally in a language which is not the speaker's native spoken language.

Taken From 'Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments. (JCQ, 2021/22)

3 Policy

3.1 Principles for using a Word processor

Exeter College complies with the Access Arrangements Reasonable Adjustments, JCQ, 2021, chapter 4 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties regulations and guidance as follows':

(Access Arrangements Reasonable Adjustments, JCQ, (2021/22, p.24))

- Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.
- 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 a disabled candidate.

(Access Arrangements Reasonable Adjustments, JCQ, (2021/22 4.2.2 p. 24))

- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the integrity of the assessment objectives of the specification question.

(Access Arrangements Reasonable Adjustments, JCQ, (2021/22, 4.2.3, p.24))

- Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

(Access Arrangements Reasonable Adjustments, JCQ, (2021/22 4.2.5 p.25))

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; or
- Working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
- Literacy support lessons; or
- Literacy intervention strategies; and/or
- Internal college tests and mock examinations

The only exception to this is where arrangement may need to be put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury at the time of an examination or assessment.

3.2 The use of a word processor

Exeter College complies with the AA Chapter 5 Access Arrangements available as follows:

(Access Arrangements Reasonable Adjustments, JCQ, (2021/22, 5.8.1, p57))

- Providing a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility /predictive text disabled (switched off).
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) within the centre.
- 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 as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand).

(The above also extends to the use of braille and tablets)

(Access Arrangements Reasonable Adjustments, JCQ, (2021/22 5.8.2, p.57))

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments and coursework) components as a standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

(Access Arrangements Reasonable Adjustments, JCQ, (2021/22 5.8.3, p.57))

- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e., those requiring extended writing and handwrite shorter answers.

N.B. 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 candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and computer screen.

(Access Arrangements Reasonable Adjustments, JCQ, (2021/22 5.8.4, p.57))

- In all cases, Exeter College will ensure that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script.
- Ensures in Functional Skills English (Reading and Writing components) the use of a word processor with the spell check facility switched on is permitted for all candidates.
- 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.

3.3 Word Processors (Computers, Laptops and tablets)

Exeter College complies with the ICE 2022/22 (14.20-14.24, p 30,) Word Processors instructions by ensuring:

- Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g., computer, laptop or tablet) with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically, and the centre provides word processors to all candidates. This also includes an electronic braille or a tablet.
- Tablets used during the examination/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'free-standing'.
- The battery capacity of a laptop or a tablet will be checked before the candidate's examination(s). Exeter College will ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination.
- Candidates with the use of a fully charged laptop or tablet will be seated within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points unless otherwise specified.
- Candidates will be reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer: e.g., 12345/8001 – 6391/01.
- 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 must handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate will be supervised to ensure that he/she is solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way.
- Each page of the typed script will be numbered, e.g., page 1 of 6.

- Invigilators will remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals. Where practicable, an IT technician may be requested to set up 'auto save' on each laptop/tablet. This way, if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost.
- Candidates will be advised to use a minimum of 12pt and double line spacing in order to assist examiners when marking.

3.4 Word Processors

Exeter College further complies with ICE instructions 2021/22 (14.25, p30), by ensuring:

- Word processors are used as a typewriter, 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 must not be used by a candidate. Where required, the centre will provide a memory stick to the candidate, which is cleared of any previously stored data;
- Word processors are in good working order at the time of the examination;
- Use of a word processor will be 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;
- The Word processor will either be connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. This will be done after the examination is over. The candidate will be present to verify that the work printed is his or her own. Word processed scripts will be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers;
- Word processors will be used to produce scripts under secure conditions, otherwise, they may be refused;
- Word processors will not be used to perform skills which are being assessed;
- Word processors will not be connected to an intranet or any other means of communication;
- Word processors will not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc.;
- Word processors will not include graphics packages or computer-aided design software unless permission has been given to use these;
- Word processors will 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 (the script will have a scribe cover sheet attached), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking;
- Word processors will not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software;
- Word processors will not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

3.5 Accommodating Word Processors in examinations

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

- Candidates using word processors will be housed in either a smaller room or an IT suite, so they cannot be overlooked by other candidates.
- If this is not possible, other arrangements will be made to ensure that the candidates using a word processor cannot be overlooked.
- Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors include the following:
- When housed within a smaller room or IT suite, invigilators will be made aware of candidates using word processors and will be informed of the processes involved. The Exams Team will be available to assist at the end of the exam to ensure scripts are printed off correctly with candidates still present to handover to the

Lead Invigilator to send off to the exam board with the rest of the cohorts completed papers. This will be the same protocol if candidates are housed in separate rooms/other areas of the college.

Other arrangements relating to the use of a word processor include:

- A JCQ Form 4 will be handed over to the invigilator at the beginning of each exam for each candidate using a word processor.

4 Implementation

This policy is for reference, for the Examinations Office and all staff involved with the administration of examinations.

This policy has been written for the internal use of a word processor and is available for Exeter College staff. This policy will be available on the Staff SharePoint portal, under Learning Support, Examination Access Arrangements, Guidance and Policies, for internal use ONLY.

5 Associated Documentation

- [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#)
- [Instructions for conducting examinations](#)

6 Procedure

Exeter College's requirements for requesting the use of a Word Processor in examinations.

Exeter College recognizes that the following candidates would benefit from the use of a word processor in examinations:

Tutor/lecturing staff need to indicate on the referral form that the candidate's need for a word processor is due to one of the categories stated below.

- 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.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS for the above categories: Evidence from a professional confirming the candidate's difficulties and Normal Way of Working (NWOW).

When requesting the use of a word processor in examinations, evidence is needed that the candidate is competent with, and regularly uses a PC/Laptop/tablet in the centre, and due to having a writing difficulty is required to show that this is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

For candidates falling into the categories below that are not supported by a confirmation of difficulties from a professional, the referrer is required to provide a NWOW evidence from all tutor/lecturing staff working with the candidate that require the use of a word processor in their area of study:

- Poor handwriting
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand

Examples of students' work which illustrate poor handwriting and/or planning and organisational problems when writing by hand need to be provided by lecturers.

Further testing will then be carried out by the Assessment Team to compare handwriting and word processing under timed conditions. Additional testing will confirm that there is a true need for the use of a word processor to support the candidate in examinations that require a long-written response.

The only exception to the above requirements is where arrangement may need to be put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury at the time of an examination or assessment.

The evidence requirements outlined above ensure that reasonable adjustments are being made to support candidates with a need for the use of a word processor during examinations, as per the Equality Act 2010 definition of Disability.

7 Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

7.1 The Senior Leadership team is responsible for the approving of the Use of Word Processors in Examinations Policy. The Board (Quality and Standards Committee) is responsible for adopting the Use of Word Processors in Examinations Policy.

7.2 The policy for the use of word processors in examinations is reviewed and updated annually by the SENCo (Head of Foundation Learning) in accordance with JCQ Regulation.

7.3 The definitive version of the policy is stored in the [College Leadership Hub](#).