



Word processor use in Assessments and Examinations at Sir William Borlase's Grammar School 2020-21

SWBGS supports and implements the use of word processors in assessments and examinations in line with JCQ regulations and recommendations.

JCQ Recommendations

5.8.1 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 and 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.

(This also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets.)

5.8.2 The use of word processors in controlled assessment or coursework components will be considered standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

5.8.3 It is permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers, annotate maps/ diagrams.

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 screen.

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.

Sir William Borlase's Grammar School Word Processor Statement 2020-21

Use of a word processor in examinations is a centre-delegated arrangement in line with JCQ information. This statement about the use of word processors has been prepared to be shared with stakeholders.

Principally, a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now **wants to** type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

It is not a reasonable adjustment for a candidate to request use of a word processor because they can type faster than they can handwrite. The use of a word processor will be as a result of a **well-established SEND need/illegible handwriting which has been identified and evidenced over time with clear professional input, eg teaching staff.**

Students and their parents are at liberty to request permission to use their own word processor/laptop/i-pad in lessons/study periods/support sessions at their own risk. This request will be considered by the SENDCo and will be granted if it is agreed it will benefit the student. A school word processor agreement must be signed before this arrangement can begin and the device has to be PAT tested before it can be used in school. Personal devices brought into school are the responsibility of the student at all times and the school cannot be held liable for any loss or damage.

Permission to use a laptop/device in class must not be taken to imply permission to allow this arrangement in assessments/exams. These decisions are taken at the start of the GCSE/A Level courses following testing and consultation with staff.

Permission to use a word processor in an exam may well be granted for 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.

This list is not exhaustive. Each case will be considered on its merits and a decision will be made by the SENDCO with evidence from relevant professionals and in consultation with relevant SLT.

Examples - Word processor

- A candidate who cannot write legibly because she has been assessed with dyslexia 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 SENDCO allows her to use a word processor in her examinations following teacher evidence.
- 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 SENDCO because it reflects his normal way of working within the centre and is appropriate to his needs. (see point above about use being based on well-established SEND need over time)

- A candidate wishes to use a word processor since this is her normal way of working within the centre and is evidenced in accordance with requirements. However, the candidate additionally wishes to use the spelling and grammar check facility. Given that she does not meet the criteria for a scribe, the candidate cannot use the spelling and grammar check facility. The SENDCO allows her to use a word processor in line with the regulations as set out in the JCQ 'ICE' booklet.
- A candidate taking an ICT paper wishes to use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility enabled. However, the paper is testing his ability to proof-read a document. The SENDCO refuses the use of the spelling and grammar check facility. He uses the word processor with the spelling and grammar check disabled (switched off).
- 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 the centre must apply for the use of a scribe.

Examples - Word processor and 25% extra time

- 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 and when typing she can produce her written work effectively, and at a speed equivalent to an average handwriting rate. She has no further learning difficulties and so she is awarded the use of a word processor as it removes the barrier presented by her slow handwriting, and only given 25% extra time when she writes by hand such as in GCSE Mathematics examinations.
- A candidate with dyslexia has a below average speed of handwriting 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 handwriting 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.

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