



Word Processor Policy (Exams) 2025/26

Effective Date: 1st September 2025

Last Reviewed: June 2025

Reviewed By: The Open Door Academy Team

Next Review Date: July 2026

Version: 1

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

2025/26



Key staff involved in the policy:

SENCO:

Mandy Surridge

Exams Officer:

Keri Kropelnicki

Access Arrangement Coordinator (AAPAC):

Laura Haines

Assessors:

David Washington

(Industry qualification, L7 Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for EAA)

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Legal Framework

This policy is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of updated JCQ/CIE regulations and guidance on access arrangements and instructions for conducting exams.

References in this policy to AARA and ICE relate to/are directly taken from the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025-2026 (AARA) and Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2025-2026 (ICE) publications.

This booklet covers the following qualifications:

AQA Applied General qualifications, AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Maths, AQA Level 3 Certificate in Mathematical Studies, BTEC Firsts, BTEC Nationals, BTEC Tech Awards, BTEC Level 2 Technicals Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, City & Guilds Level 2 and Level 3 Technical qualifications, ELC, FSMQ, Functional Skills, GCE, GCSE, OCR Level 3 Certificates, T-Levels Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ), WJEC Level 1 and Level 2 General qualifications, WJEC Level 1 and Level 2 Vocational qualifications, WJEC Level 1 and Level 2 Vocational Awards (Technical Awards), WJEC Level 3 Applied qualifications

1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026

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Introduction

The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement.

(AARA 1.2)

The duty for an awarding body to make a reasonable adjustment will apply where assessment arrangements would put a disabled candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a candidate who is not disabled. In such circumstances, the awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage. Awarding bodies are not required to make adjustments to the academic or other standard being applied when conducting an examination/ assessment. Where a centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, it must not charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.

(AARA 3.1)

It is vital that centres recruit with integrity with regard to general qualifications. Centres must ensure that learners have in an accessible format the correct information and advice on their selected qualifications and that the qualifications will meet their needs.

The centre must assess each potential learner and make justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete and achieve the qualifications. Such an assessment must identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to the qualifications.

(AARA 4.2.3)

Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. SENCOs must consider the need for access arrangements on a subject-by-subject basis.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how schools within The Open Door Academy complies with AARA (chapter 1) Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties and (chapter 5.8) Word processor when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in his/her exams.

The term 'word processor' is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet.

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The use of a word processor

The centre will

- 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. (AARA 5.8.1)
- award the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs
Needs may include:
 - a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to write legibly
 - a medical condition
 - a physical disability
 - a sensory impairment
 - planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
 - poor handwriting (AARA 5.8.4)
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AARA 4.2.1)
- not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AARA 4.2.2)
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification (AARA 4.2.3)
- consider the needs of the candidate at the start of the candidate's course leading to a qualification based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the candidate's needs and 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests/exams, mock exams etc. and confirm arrangements in place before the candidate takes an exam or assessment (AARA 4.2.4)
- provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AARA 5.8.2)

The centre will not

- 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 (AARA 5.8.4)

Exceptions

The only exceptions to the above where the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate would be

- 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 (AARA 4.2.4)
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates (AARA 5.8.4)

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Arrangements at the time of the assessment for the use of a word processor

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in a smaller room.

In compliance with the regulations the centre

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20)
- (where a candidate is to be seated with the main cohort without the use of a power point) checks the battery capacity of the word processor before the candidate's exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the exam (ICE 14.21)
- ensures the candidate is reminded to ensure that his/her centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer e.g. 12345/8001 – 6391/01 (ICE 14.22)
- 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 is instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that he/she is solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way.
- ensures the candidate understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23)
- ensures the candidate is reminded to save his/her work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet)
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking (ICE 14.24)

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure the word processor

- is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable and is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is cleared of any previously stored data
- does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc.
- 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 speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

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Portable storage medium

The centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used

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

Printing the script after the exam is over

- The centre 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 (Form 4) is completed and included with the candidate's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions)