



ST ALBANS
SCHOOL

Word Processing in Exams Policy

Part 1 - Regulations:

Date of review	October 2021
Effective date	November 2021
Date of next review	September 2022
Responsibility for Review	VJS, AJB, AKG, NMG
Circulation	Governors, all staff, volunteers, website, parents on request
Status	Complies with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• JCQ Access Arrangements regulations 2021-22¹.• Guidance provided by other awarding bodies.

¹ Source: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AA_regs_21-22_v11.pdf [Accessed Sept. 2021].

St Albans School works in accordance with the *JCQ regulations² and other awarding bodies*, to award and allocate the use of a word processor³ to a candidate for external examinations:

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.*

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 braille and tablets.)

5.8.2 *The use of word processors in non-examination assessment 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.*

NB *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 as the candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and computer screen.*

5.8.4 *For the regulations on the use of word processors in written examinations, please see the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations (commonly known as the JCQ 'ICE' booklet)*⁴*

- *A centre **must** have a policy on the use of word processors. 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.*
- *The centre may wish to set out the types of candidates which it considers would benefit from the use of a word processor. For example, 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.*

² Source: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AA_regs_21-22_v11.pdf [Accessed Sept. 2021].

³ For 'word processor', please also read as computer, laptop, desktop, electronic braille.

⁴ Source: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conductingexaminations> [Accessed Sept 2021].

- *A member of the centre's senior leadership team **must** produce a statement for inspection purposes (this policy document) which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations.*

Part 2 – Referral and assessment process:

1. Teachers will need to ensure that pupils handwrite all end of unit tests and internal exams, unless Learning Support has agreed otherwise in accordance with this policy, so that pupils maintain this important skill.
2. If a pupil, parent, guardian, or teacher has a concern about the legibility and / or speed of a candidates' handwriting, they should first raise their concern with the Learning Support Department using the following e-mail address: learningsupport@st-albans.herts.sch.uk copying in the Form Tutor for information.
3. The Learning Support referral process will then be instigated, including a check of the new pupil screening records for handwriting speed and legibility. (See Learning Support Policy for further details).
4. Laptops are allowed in lessons for classwork from the Third Form upwards, but not in the Lower School, unless a *need* has been established and agreed by the Head of Learning Support.
5. In order to establish a word processing *need* for any pupil, the learning support referral process has to be followed (see point 3 above).
6. Learning Support will, if appropriate, provide suitable guidance and support measures to help improve the legibility and / or speed of a candidate's handwriting.
7. In terms of word processing in exams, only pupils who have been assessed by the Learning Support Department as *needing* a laptop, are allowed to use one in tests and exams.
8. The use of an approved word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre for substantial timed tests including end of unit tests and internal exams. All teaching staff, parents, guardians and pupils need to be aware that the use of a word processor for class or homework does not constitute a normal way of working in relation to examinations.
9. Learning Support will ask the candidate's teachers to send them handwritten examples showing evidence of their concerns that will be considered alongside other correspondence.
10. Learning Support will, if significant and long-term difficulties persist, undertake a standardised handwriting assessment, the results of which will help determine the next course of action. In doing so, Learning Support will take into consideration a candidate's ability to type, and/or a recommendation from a pre-entry, or subsequently approved external assessment report.
11. As part of this decision process, candidates will be asked to complete a typing activity to determine whether or not their typing speed and accuracy is appropriate for this provision.

12. Learning Support will make the final decision regarding the appropriateness of awarding and allocating a word processor to a candidate for internal tests/exams and external examinations.

Part 3 – Practicalities:

1. Candidates are reminded that if they have been given permission to word process their written external examination, this will be on a school laptop / computer and keyboard that is not their own.
2. The software programme (ExamWritePad) will be used by candidates for internal tests, summer exams, mocks and final GCSE / A Level exams.
3. In line with exam rules there is no spelling, punctuation or grammar function in ExamWritePad, unless an alternative arrangement has been approved by Learning Support.
4. Candidates are encouraged to use ExamWritePad to practise word processing without the support of auto-correct functions.
5. 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.
6. Guidance is provided in the document, '*Word Processing - Instructions*' which is shared with pupils.
7. Electronic copies of work undertaken on a word processor from an internal examination will be saved by the Learning Support Department. This will constitute evidence to support a need, as it is relevant to the expected external exam conditions i.e. full-length and timed.
8. The use of word processors in non-examination assessment components will be considered standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.
9. Word processing in controlled assessments is allowed, with subject teacher permission, but does not establish a candidate's normal way of working for examination purposes.