



ST ALBANS
SCHOOL

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Word Processing in Exams Policy

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SLT policy responsibility	Deputy Head (Teaching & Learning)
Policy contributions	Head of Learning Support; Access Arrangements Assessor; Exams Officer
Circulation	Governors, all staff, volunteers, website, parents on request
Status	Complies with: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. JCQ Access Arrangements regulations 2022-23¹.2. JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations 2022-2023².3. CAIE Access Arrangements (pending January 2023 release)³.

¹ Source: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/AA_regs_22-23_FINAL.pdf [Accessed Sept. 2022].

² Source: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice--instructions-for-conducting-examinations/> [Accessed Sept. 2022].

³ Source: <https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/exam-administration/cambridge-exams-officers-guide/phase-1-preparation/access-arrangements/> [Accessed Jan. 2022].

Part 1 - Regulations:

St Albans School works in accordance with the *JCQ regulations and other awarding bodies*, to award and allocate the use of a word processor⁴ 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 brailleurs 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):*

- *A centre **must** have a policy on the use of word processors (this document). 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.*

⁴ For 'word processor', please also read as computer, laptop, desktop, electronic brailleur.

- *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 – Criteria used to award and allocate word processors for examinations

1. Teachers will need to ensure that pupils handwrite all end of unit tests and internal exams in order to maintain this important skill, unless Learning Support has agreed otherwise in accordance with this policy.
2. 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 a school one in tests and exams.
3. This must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the school for substantial timed tests including end of unit tests and internal exams.
4. All teaching staff, parents, carers 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.
5. In addition to a standardised handwriting assessment undertaken by the Learning Support Department, candidates will be asked to complete a typing activity to determine whether or not their typing speed and accuracy is appropriate for this provision.
6. The Learning Support Department will take into consideration a candidate's ability to type, and/or a recommendation from a pre-entry, or subsequently approved external assessment report.
7. However, the Head of Learning Support will make the final centre-delegated decision, based on all the available evidence, regarding the appropriateness of awarding and allocating a word processor to a candidate for tests and exams.
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.

Part 3 – Referral and assessment process

1. If a teacher, pupil, parent or carer has a substantial and long-term concern about the legibility and / or speed of a candidates' handwriting, they should first raise this with the Learning Support Department at the earliest opportunity, using the following e-mail address: learningsupport@st-albans.herts.sch.uk copying in the Form Tutor.
2. The Learning Support referral process will then be instigated in order to establish whether or not there is a *need* for word processing. Below is a summary of the steps involved:

- a. Concerns are shared with Head of Learning Support via: learningsupport@st-albans.herts.sch.uk
 - b. Existing screening results are checked, including handwriting speed and legibility.
 - c. Teacher questionnaire(s) are distributed to gather specific information. Learning Support will also ask the candidate's teachers to send them handwritten examples showing evidence of their concerns that will be considered alongside other correspondence.
 - d. A referral meeting is booked with the pupil, who also completes a questionnaire.
 - e. A report is shared with the tutor, parents and pupil, including action points. Learning Support will, if appropriate, provide suitable guidance and support measures to help improve the legibility and / or speed of a candidate's handwriting.
 - f. If appropriate, the pupil is encouraged to meet with the School Counsellor.
 - g. The pupil attends further in-house screening and / or assessments, after which appropriate access arrangements and reasonable adjustments may then be considered and trialled.
 - h. Additional access arrangements and reasonable adjustments can be considered and/or trialled by Learning Support if based on new evidence.
 - i. The pupil receives 1:1 support with a member of the Learning Support department if required.
 - j. Teachers are asked to monitor the situation and provide feedback as appropriate.
3. Temporary illness or injury arrangements should be discussed with the Head of Learning Support in the first instance. Medical evidence will be requested, but this should only identify the illness or injury and not particular exam access arrangements. These are determined by the School in line with the JCQ regulations and based on all the available evidence.

Part 4 – Managing laptops in the classroom and during assessments:

1. 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, in accordance with this policy.
2. Pupils with permission to word process in lessons, tests and exams, will be provided with and need to adhere to the 'Word Processing – Instructions' document, a summary of which is below:
 - a. 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.
 - b. The software programme (ExamWritePad) will be used by candidates for internal tests, summer exams, mocks and final GCSE / A Level exams. Candidates are encouraged to use ExamWritePad to practise word processing.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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.
 - e. Electronic copies of work will be kept by Learning Support in-line with current JCQ regulations.