

Principles for using a word processor

A word processor may be used in an examination where the requirement for handwriting would place a candidate at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. A candidate may have a diagnosed disability such as dyspraxia, joint hypermobility or cerebral palsy which limits their ability to handwrite or may be an extremely 'messy' writer whose handwriting is largely illegible.

Candidates requiring the use of a word processor in examinations will have a history of handwriting difficulties which are persistent and obvious in their school work. They will regularly use a word processor to complete writing tasks in the classroom and assessments. 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.'

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

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 on candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject by subject basis. Use of a word processor in an exam must reflect use of a word processor in that subject during lessons and assessments throughout the GCSE course.

The use of a word processor should be agreed at the start of the course. Candidates must be made aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and controlled assessments and coursework and use them for this purpose.

The use of a word processor

Welling School will only grant the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre. We do not grant the use of a word processor to a candidate simply because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.

The use of a word processor will only be granted 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). Welling School will provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled for examinations.

Candidates may use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers. We are aware that 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. In all cases, the school will ensure that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and attached to each candidate's typed script.

Word Processors and their programmes

Word processors will be in good working order at the time of the examination and either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. Documents are printed after the examination is over and when candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own.

Word processors are used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable. Word processors must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used. An unauthorised memory stick is not permitted for use by a candidate. Where required, candidates are provided with a memory stick, which has been cleared of any previously stored data, by a nominated member of centre staff.

Candidates are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc. when using a word processor. Graphic packages or computer aided design software is not included on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these.

Predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is disabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a scribe cover sheet attached), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking. Voice recognition technology is not included on word processors unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software.

Word processors are 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 separately, a separate invigilator is used.

Word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions, if not they may be refused by the awarding body.

Word processed scripts are attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers.

Word processors are not used to perform skills which are being assessed and are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.

Word processors are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

Laptops, Tablets and Word Processors

Tablets used during examinations/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'freestanding'.

The battery capacity of all laptops and/or tablets is checked before the candidate's examination(s) with the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination.

Candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer.

Candidates using Notepad or Wordpad software (which do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer) are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished the examination and printed off their typed script if they have not already typed this information into the document. They are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not rereading their answers or amending their work in any way.

Each page of a typed script must be appropriately numbered. Candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing. Invigilators will remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals. It is possible to set up 'autosave' onto each laptop/tablet.

Accommodating word processors in examinations

Accommodation will be as appropriate for an exam. A number of candidates may be roomed together if they are all using a word processor. Appropriate invigilation will be provided.