

Word Processor & Assistive Technology Policy (Exams) 2023/24

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1.0	September 2023	
2.0	March 2024	Placed on standardised proforma

*This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

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1. Key staff involved awarding and allocating word processors and assistive technology for exams

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Level 7 Tutor/ Assessors	L7 assessor Pam Merrick
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2. Introduction

This policy on the use of word processors and assistive technology in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) and [Instructions for conducting examinations](#).

References to 'AA' relate to JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2020-2021* and ICE to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2020-2021*.

3. Purpose of the Policy

This policy details how the centre manages and administers the use of word processors and assistive technology (including laptops and tablets) in examinations and assessments.

4. Principles for using a word processor

The Manchester College complies with AA chapter 4 Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties regulations and guidance as follows:

(AA 4.2.1)

- Candidates with access to word processors and assistive technology are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties
- The use of word processors and assistive technology is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate

(AA 4.2.2)

- The use of a word processor or assistive technology is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question

(AA 4.2.3)

- 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 of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis

(AA 4.2.4)

- The use of a word processor or assistive technology is normally considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course providing the centre has firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working for a candidate
- Candidates are made aware when they will have the use of a word processor or assistive technology for timetabled examinations and non-examination assessments

(AA 4.2.5)

- The use of a word processor or assistive technology for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:
 - in the classroom or on work placement or
 - working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
 - literacy support lessons; or
 - literacy intervention strategies; and/or
 - in internal school tests/examinations
 - mock examinations

The only exceptions to the above would be 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.

6. The use of a word processor

The Manchester College complies with AA chapter 5 Access arrangements available as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off)
- Only grants the use of a word processor or assistive technology to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) within the centre
- Only grants the use of a word processor or assistive technology 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)
(The above also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets)

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors and assistive technology to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification

(AA 5.8.3)

- Allows candidates to use a word processor or assistive technology in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers
- Are also 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

(AA 5.8.4)

- In all cases, ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script (according to the instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- Does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home

Centre specific processes

- The Manchester College provides support to a high number of SEND and High Needs learners. Provision of a word processor is not based on a personal preference but a clearly identified, tangible and evidenced need
- The “Normal Way of Working” for all exam candidates, as directed by the Head of Centre, is to handwrite their exam responses. The exception to this is where a candidate has had an exam access arrangement approved, such as a Scribe or speech recognition software.
- The use of a word processor or assistive technology must reflect the candidate’s normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate’s needs.
- The nature of such candidates would fall into the following categories such as having;
 - 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
 - Particularly poor and undecipherable handwriting

7. Word processors and assistive technology and their programmes

The Manchester College complies with ICE 8.8 Word processors and assistive technology instructions by ensuring:

- word processors and assistive technology are used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- word processors and assistive technology 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
- word processors and assistive technology are in good working order at the time of the examination
- word processors and assistive technology 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 and assistive technology are 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
- candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own
- word processed scripts are inserted in/attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers (and according to instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- word processors and assistive technology are used to produce scripts under secure conditions, and if they are not then the centre is aware that they may be refused by the awarding body
- word processors and assistive technology are not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- word processors and assistive technology are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
- 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 completed scribe cover sheet included), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- voice recognition technology is not included on word processors and assistive technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- word processors and assistive technology are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

8. Laptops and tablets

The Manchester College further complies with ICE 8.8 instructions by ensuring:

- tablets used during examinations/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'free-standing'
- 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 with fully charged laptops or tablets are given the opportunity to be seated within the main examination hall without the need for separate invigilation and power points
- 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; candidates are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way
- candidates are instructed to appropriately number each page
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals
- where it is possible 'autosave' is set up on each laptop/tablet
- candidates are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed is their own

9. Accommodating word processors and assistive technology in examinations

Candidates using word processors and assistive technology (including laptops or tablets) are internally accommodated in the following manner:

- Candidates will be accommodated in an on-screen exam room where possible. On-screen exam rooms are permanently set up in exam conditions to meet JCQ regulations and candidates will not have access to the internet. Where a candidate is using a laptop and is not accommodated in an on-screen exam room, restricted access to the internet will be managed by the invigilator. After the exam, candidates will be accompanied to the nearest printer and will be asked to check and verify and sign their printed script.
- Some students, where there is evidence of disability and it is their Normal Way of Working within the classroom will be granted permission to use Read Write software to independently access computer reader and dictation applications. These will be set to exam settings only, with no access to apps or additional support that may be deemed to give an unfair advantage.

10. Equality and Diversity

Students can expect an inclusive and supportive learning environment whatever their background.

11. Related Policies and Procedures

- Student Safeguarding Policy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- TMC Access Arrangements Policy
- TMC Word Processor Policy

12. Location and Access to this Policy

- Staff HUB
- Student HUB