Word Processor & Assistive Technology Policy (Exams) 2026/27

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Version	Date	Revisions
1.0	September 2023	
2.0	March 2024	Placed on standardised proforma
3.0	November 2024	
4.0	September 2025	Updated to promote independence and to consider assistive technology as a first option before recommending human support.
5.0	August 2026	

*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

Role	Name(s)	
Director SEND Learning and Support	Andrew Hulme	
Head of ALS (Neurodiversity) SENDCo for EAA purposes	Tracey Melling	
Level 7 Tutor/ Assessors	L7 assessor L7 assessor L7 assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor (no longer at the college) L7 Assessor (no longer at the college)	Pam Merrick Alex Glynn Julie Probin Billy Wood Amy Gregg Donna Marsh Rachel Wilson Stacey Stone Ben Holden Alison Mollon Lorna Murie Alexandra Owen Vacancy Vacancy Teresa McGeough Caroline Ritson

Neurodiversity Specialist SEND SSPs EAAs for HNLs only.	Assistive Technology Assistant Assistive Technology Assistant Senior SSP Accessibility/SpLD Senior SSP Accessibility/SpLD Senior SSP Accessibility/SpLD Senior SSP Accessibility/SpLD Specialist SSP Dyslexia/SpLD (no longer ta the college)	Sue Bleasdale Allison Redlich Lexi Brylak Afia Gyamfi Grant Hurst Abby Watts Deborah Lord
Examination officers (allocating)	<u>Exams Function:</u> Exams Business Relationship Team Leader Exams Business Relationship Officer Exams Business Relationship Officer Exams Business Relationship Officer Exams Business Relationship Officer Exams Business Relationship Officer Exams Business Relationship Officer <u>EAA applications:</u> Exams Administrator Team Leader Exams Administrator Exams Administrator Exams Administrator Exams Administrator Exams Administrator	 Ethan Robinson Hasan Uddin Joanne Kelly Peter Crowe Lisa Clarke Phoebe Kerr Lisa Harrop Stephen Cullen Courtney Mottershead Molly Richardson Said Omar Charley Hemingbrough Hazal Tuglaci

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 2025.26* and ICE to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2025-2026*.

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.

This will include:

- Laptops without Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation (No SPaG)
- Laptops with Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation
- Reader Pens
- Computer Readers

4. Principles for using a word processor and Assistive Technology

The Manchester College complies with the **JCQ Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 25.26** chapter 5 Access Arrangements and Adjustments guidance as follows:

- A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard or because they use a laptop at home. Exam Access Arrangements are only applied for where there is an evidenced disability or learning difficulty. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. The Manchester College considers student's possible need for using a word processor or assistive technology 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.

- 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.

5. The Manchester College

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors and assistive technology to candidates with learning difficulties/ disabilities or medical conditions 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)

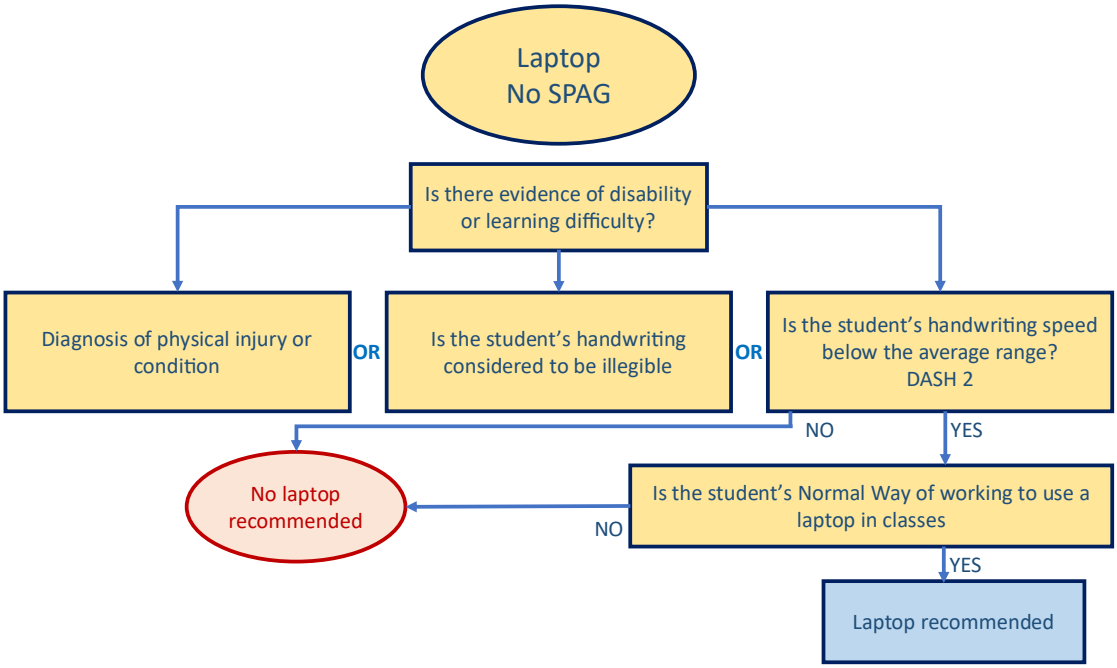
- In all cases, ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script (according to the instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- Does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather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

6. Centre Specific Processes

The Manchester College provides support to a high number of SEND and High Needs learners. All staff focus on promoting independence, not dependency and help prepare our students for their future life. We consider Assistive Technology whenever appropriate before human support. Where a student still requires human support, teaching and support staff work together to plan for progression towards using assistive technology in the future.

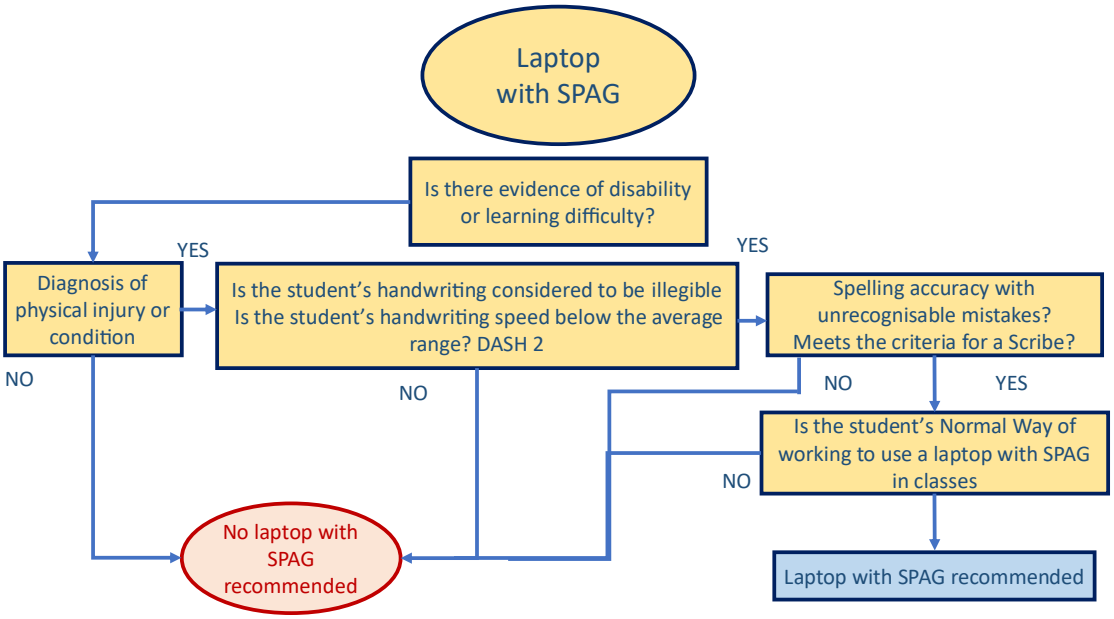
Use of a Laptop no SPAG

- Provision of a word processer 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 Laptop, Scribe or speech recognition software.
- The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.



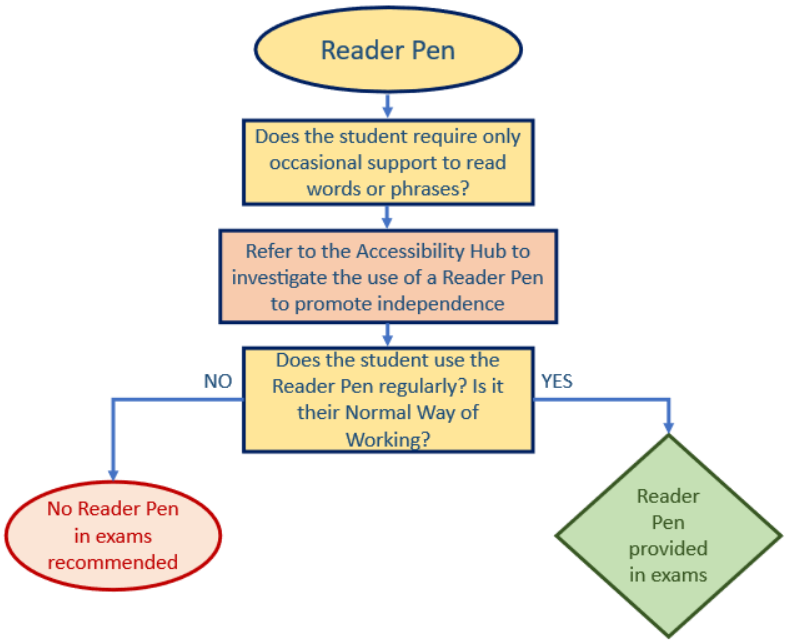
Use of a laptop with SPAG

- Provision of a word processer with SPAG is not based on a personal preference but a clearly identified, tangible and evidenced support need.
- Any barriers to learning will be significant, and students will be considered to have a disability under the Equality Act.
- Students will meet the published JCQ criteria for the use of a Scribe.
- 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 Laptop, Scribe or speech recognition software.
- The use of a word processor with SPAG enabled must reflect the candidate’s normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate’s needs.

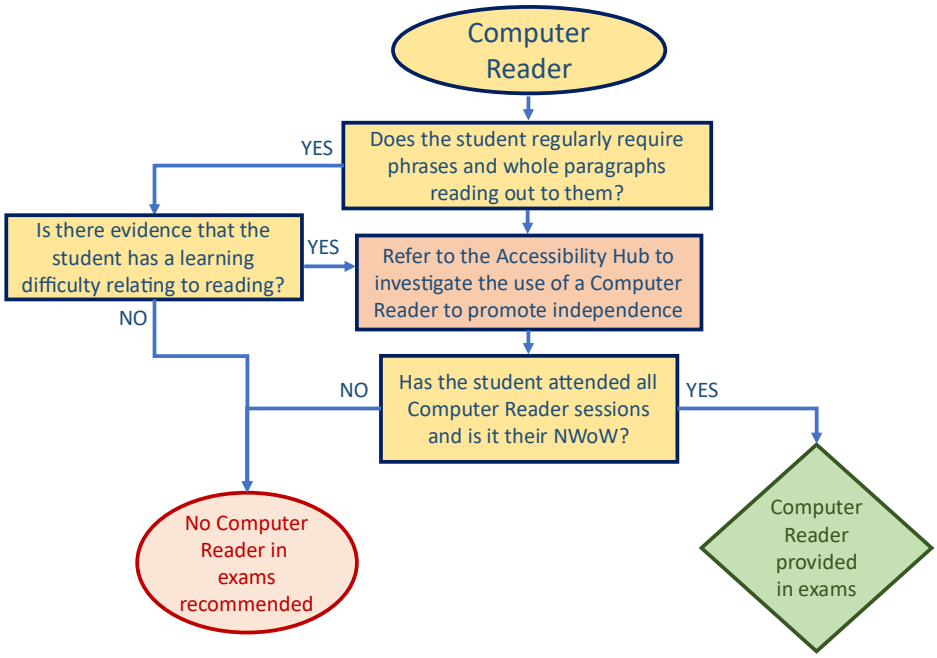


Use of a Reader Pen or Computer Reader

- Provision of a Reader Pen or Computer Reader 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 read independently. The exception to this is where a candidate has had an exam access arrangement approved, such as a Reader, Reader Pen or Computer Reader. The use of assistive technology must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.



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 type-writer, 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.
- Candidates requiring timers or headphones are responsible for bringing their own for use in exams and assessments, as per their normal way of working within the classroom.

- Reader Pens, where previously approved, will be provided by the Accessibility Hub to ensure each device is exam compliant, and does not contain any preprogrammed information that may lead to the undermining of the learning objectives being assessed.
- Where there is an evidenced need, and it is their Normal Way of Working, students will be allowed to listen to white noise or music, using their own headphones. Personal headphones must be checked before the exam, and any music files checked for content. No access to the internet will be allowed to listen to music online.

Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors and assistive technology include the following:

Where candidates are accommodated in an on-screen exam room, invigilation will be dependent on the following and will be at the discretion of the Exam Officer to ensure JCQ regulations are adhered to:

  - the nature of the exam,
  - the layout of the room,
  - the type of assistive technology being used (if applicable)
  - the number of candidates, to ensure all candidates are in view

Printing of candidate work will be under the supervision of invigilator/s at the end of the exam.

Where candidates are using laptops and/or using assistive technology, they will be accommodated in another room or a one-to-one room and have a separate invigilation

which will be at the discretion of the Exam Officer to ensure JCQ regulations are adhered to.

Invigilators will ensure that the candidate has no access to applications or the internet during the exam. Printing of candidate work will be under the supervision of invigilator at the end of the exam.

Other arrangements relating to the use of word processors and assistive technology include:

- Reader Pens, where previously approved, will be provided by the Accessibility Hub to ensure each device is exam compliant, and does not contain any preprogrammed information that may lead to the undermining of the learning objectives being assessed.
- Where there is an evidenced need, and it is their Normal Way of Working, students will be allowed to listen to white noise or music, using their own headphones. Personal headphones must be checked before the exam, and any music files checked for content. No access to the internet will be allowed to listen to music online.

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

13. Equality Impact Assessment

Are there concerns that this policy could have an adverse impact on any of these protected is action required?		If Yes, is action required?
Age	No	
Disability	Yes	Student with visual needs are prioritised before all other students with learning difficulties and disabilities due to the shorter deadlines applying for modified and tactile papers. Delay in processing these applications, would lead to students not receiving their modified or tactile papers in time for the exam. Students who require a practical assistant may not be recommended this support in exams if this would undermine the learning outcomes being assessed. This is covered by Section 96 (7-8) of the Equality Act where awarding bodies are not under any legal responsibility to make reasonable adjustments as this would lead to an unfair advantage and damage the integrity of the qualification being assessed.
Gender reassignment	No	
Marriage or civil partnership	No	
Pregnancy and maternity	No	
Race	No	
Religion	No	
Sex	No	
Sexual orientation	No	
EIA Summary		
Person responsible for EIA	Tracey Melling (HoD Neurodiversity & EAAs) and Marie Stock, Vice Principal	
EIA Outcome & statement		
The Access Arrangements and Laptop and Assistive Technology Policies have been created in conjunction with the most up to date published copy of the JCQ Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Regulations. JCQ Regulations are updated each year and inform current assessments for exams access support. It directly considers the recommendation to promote the use of Assistive Technology to promote independence and prepare students for work life.		