WORD PROCESSOR POLICY (EXAMS)

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Minsthorpe Community College: A place where everyone plays a part in strengthening our learning community through Motivation, Commitment & Care.

Minsthorpe
Community College

Section 1

Introduction

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, after the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for conducting examinations and after update training on the changes to access arrangements has been completed.

At Minsthorpe Community College candidates who require a word processor for their examinations are provided with laptops which comply with JCQ regulation 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_." *(Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2023-2024, page 58)*

At Minsthorpe Community College our policy also recognises those candidates who require a word processor for their examinations are provided with laptops which comply with JCQ regulation 5.7.5:

Where the centre has approval for the use of a scribe and where it reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, as appropriate to his/her needs, the candidate may alternatively use:

• a word processor with the spelling and grammar check switched on; or

• a word processor with predictive text/spelling and grammar check switched on.
(Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2023-2024, page 52)

Section 2

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how the College manages and administers the use of word processors in examinations and assessments.

Section 3

Principles for using a Word Processor

The use of word processors is allowed in order to remove barriers for candidates who would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

Examples of candidate barriers to learning that would benefit from the use of a word processor include those 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 word processors 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.

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 to be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

The use of a word processor is considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course.

The use of word processors in non-examination assessment components will be considered standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

Candidates are made aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments/coursework).

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', which is defined as support:

- in the classroom; or
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
- literacy support lessons; or
- literacy intervention strategies; and/or
- in internal college tests and mock examinations

The only exception to this is where an arrangement may need to be put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment at the time of an exam or assessment.

It is our policy that candidates must show proficiency in the use of a word processor before using it in lessons and for examinations as set out in the MCC Laptop Protocol (04/23), except in in the case of temporary injury or impairment at the time of the examination.

Criteria for Selecting Students to use a word processor

Minsthorpe Community College use a range of assessments and criteria to agree the deployment of word processors to students to use as their normal way of working and is referred to in the college SEN Information Report. The process for determining whether a child can use a word processor includes:

- Initial handwriting assessment on admission indicating a requirement for intervention due to legibility and/or speed of handwriting giving a standardised score of 84 or below;
- Intervention taking place that evidences that the child will not improve through using alternate writing strategies;
- Touch typing assessment and intervention, as required, demonstrates significant improvement in quality of language;
- Advice from a health professional;
- Advice from a specialist education professional.

Section 5
The use of a word processor

We will:

- provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off); OR
- Where the centre has approval for the use of a scribe and where it reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, as appropriate to his/her needs, the candidate may alternatively use:

A word processor with predictive text/spelling and grammar check facility enabled; (NB This arrangement will not be permitted in ELC, GCSE and GCE Modern Foreign Language specifications. See paragraph 5.7.5.)

- only grant the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre;
- only grant the use of a word processor 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). (This also extends to the use of electronic braillers and tablets)
- provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments or coursework) as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification;
- Where a candidate with learning difficulties is not subject to a current Education, Health and Care Plan (England), a current Statement of Special Educational Needs (Northern Ireland), or a current Individual Development Plan (Wales), Form 8 must show a below average spelling accuracy standardised score (a standardised score of 84 or less) with unrecognisable spellings;
- allow candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers
- in all cases, ensure that a word processor cover sheet for awarding bodies requiring their own WP cover sheet is available (JCQ Form 4 for Edexcel and OCR exams and CIE Form 5 for Cambridge exams) completed and included for each exam.
- candidate's typed script

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.

A word processor will not be granted to a candidate simply because he prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he uses a laptop at home.

We can retain electronic copies of word processed scripts so that in the event of a printed copy being lost a copy is available. The Head of Centre would need to demonstrate in writing that the file has been kept securely in these circumstances.

Word processors and their programmes

Minsthorpe Community College will ensure that:

- word processors are used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;
- word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used;
- unauthorised memory sticks are not used by candidates;
- 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, usually the EO;
- word processors are in good working order at the time of the examination;
- word processors are accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen (normal procedure is for exam candidates using laptops are seated at the back of the exam venue to ensure that their screens cannot be overlooked);
- where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated separately, a separate invigilator is used;
- word processors 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 any answer booklet which contains some of the answers;
- word processors 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 are not used to perform skills which are being assessed;
- word processors 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 unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software;

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

At the end of the examination

The EO will make arrangements for each candidate to have access to an exam account where only the candidate and the EO have access. After the exam the candidate will be asked to go to the Exams Secure store where:-

- Documents are printed by the EO with the candidate present, and the candidate is supervised whilst signing each printed page to verify that the work printed is his
- Laptop cover sheets are signed as appropriate
- The candidate is allowed to leave and the exam paper will be saved in a secure area only accessible by the EO and deleted from the student exam account.

Candidates using laptops are seated in separate rooms so they are close to wall sockets and their laptops are plugged in for the duration of the exam. The students require separate invigilation in their examinations when they are using their laptops.

Exam laptops have "Open Office" software installed with the spellcheck and grammar check functions disabled. This software has an auto save function. "Open Office" also allows candidates to insert headers and footers and candidates will be reminded to:
- insert their details on in a header or footer on each page – i.e. Name, Candidate Number, Centre Number and the examination unit/component code;
- appropriately number each page;
- use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing.

Accommodating word processors in examinations

Candidates using laptops are internally accommodated in the following manner:

- Candidates are seated at the back of exam venues;
- Power connectors are set up by the EO/Invigilator for each laptop before the start of an exam;
- Where necessary additional space/extra desk will be provided if required (e.g. candidate with broken arm or wrist; candidate with enlarged examination paper).

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

- Invigilators will assist or summon help from the EO in the case of a technical fault;

- Invigilators are instructed to record stop times for a laptop candidate in the case of a technical fault; and to adjust the candidate's finish time in such instances; candidates will be clearly informed of the new finish time.

Other arrangements relating to the use of word processors include:

- Exam-ready laptops are stored for the duration of the exam series in a locked room close to the main exam venue so that replacement laptops are immediately available in the case of a technical fault;
- A small number of exam-ready laptops are kept securely by the EO in case they are needed at short notice in any other exam venues;
- The EO will ensure that all laptops are set-up and working properly, and check that all data is cleared, before the start of each exam.
- IT rooms are book using the staff booking system for days where we have an insufficient number of laptops.

Final Section

Equality Assessment

This policy has been assessed with regard to its impact on equalities issue, with specific reference to the aims of the Equality Act 2010. The equality impact assessment focused on race, gender, disability, pregnancy and maternity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and religion/belief.

Policy Review Schedule

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current JCQ regulations

Policy last reviewed:	Due for next review:	Role Responsible:
October 2019	October 2020	Associate Assistant Principal (Additional Needs)
October 2020	October 2021	Associate Assistant Principal (Additional Needs)
October 2021	October 2022	Associate Assistant Principal (Director of Student Support)
October 2022	October 2023	Associate Assistant Principal (Director of Student Support)
December 2023	December 2024	Associate Assistant Principal (Director of Student Support)