




Word Processor (Exams) Policy

2025/26

Academic Year

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Department Area	Funding Data & Exams
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	<p>POLICY</p> <p>Word Processor (Exams) Policy</p> <p>2025/2026 Academic Year</p>	Number	
		Page	1 of 9
		Version	1

This policy is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance on access arrangements and instructions for conducting exams.

The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access Arrangement (see the College's Additional Learning Support (Access Arrangements) Policy).

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties.

The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate. The additional learning support lead or an equivalent member of staff within the College must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question. For example, the use of a practical assistant will not normally be allowed when practical skills are being tested.

Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. College Staff should consider the need for access arrangements on a subject-by subject basis.

Purpose of this Policy

This policy details how The Sandwell Colleges, with its Additional Learning Support (Access Arrangements) Policy


The term 'word processor' is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet.

The Use of a Word Processor

The Sandwell Colleges will:

- allocate the use of a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre for example, the quality of language significantly improved because of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand but only if there is evidence to show that this will not advantage or disadvantage candidates.
- the use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working in the centre, for example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors for all candidates

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	09/2025							

 The Sandwell Colleges	POLICY Word Processor (Exams) Policy 2025/2026 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	2 of 9
		Version	1

- allow use of word processor with spelling and grammar switched on or a word processor with predictive text/spelling and grammar check switched on where the centre has approval for use of a scribe and where it reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, as appropriate to the candidate's needs. If the candidate does not have a current EHCP, a candidate must show a below average spelling accuracy score of 84 or less with unrecognisable spellings.
- word processors in non-examination assessment components will be considered standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.
- allow a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and hand write shorter answers if appropriate
- consider students' difficulties to qualify for a word processor:
 - 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 Sandwell Colleges will not:

- grant a word processor to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.
- grant a word processor if this does not reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- allow a candidate to use their own word processor in an exam.

Permission to use a laptop or device in class should not be taken to imply permission or to allow this arrangement in assessments/exams.

Exceptions

The only exception to the above is where a word processor would be considered for a candidate would be


- in the event of 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

Arrangements at the time of the Assessment for the use of a Word Processor

A candidate using a word processor is usually accommodated in a smaller room.

The Sandwell Colleges will:

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	09/2025							

	<p>POLICY</p> <p>Word Processor (Exams) Policy</p> <p>2025/2026 Academic Year</p>	Number	
		Page	3 of 9
		Version	1

- provide a word processor with spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled, to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates
- check the battery capacity of the word processor before the candidate's exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the exam allowing seating of a candidate without the need for separate power points or individual invigilation - unless this is part of their exam access arrangements
- ensure the candidate is reminded to check that their centre number, candidate number and unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer


If a candidate is using the software application Notepad or Wordpad, these do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer. In such circumstances, once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off their typed script, they must handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate must be supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way.

- ensure the candidate understands that each page of the typed script
- must be numbered
- invigilators must remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet)
- instruct the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing to assist examiners when marking

The Sandwell Colleges will ensure the word processor

- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although any standard formatting software is acceptable and is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is cleared of any previously stored data. An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate. If needed, the centre must provide a memory stick which is cleared of any previously stored data for the candidate
- does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc.
- does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these
- does not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking)
- is not to be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe
- must not be used to perform skills that are being assessed

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	09/2025							

	<p>POLICY</p> <p>Word Processor (Exams) Policy</p> <p>2025/2026 Academic Year</p>	Number	
		Page	4 of 9
		Version	1

Printing the script after the exam is over

The Sandwell Colleges will ensure

- the word processor is either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- that the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is their own.
- that a word-processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers.
- a word processor cover sheet may be required by an awarding body
- electronic copies of word-processed scripts may be retained and may be used by an awarding body if the printed copy is lost.
- that the electronic file has been kept securely.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	09/2025							