



EXAMINATIONS – LAPTOP AND WORD PROCESSOR POLICY

Centre 17632

This policy on the use of word processors and laptops as a normal way of working in the classroom and in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated in line with the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for conducting examinations.

Any pupil may type in an exam where the subject department has opted in to the exam board's online exam in that subject. This does not grant provision to type in elements other than the online exam, and it does not grant permission for pupils to type in any other subjects.

In 2022, the school introduced the use of tablet devices for specific year groups. The school makes a clear distinction between tablet devices (which are used for touch screen/stylus input **only** and are not an access arrangement) and laptops (which are used for typing/word processing and are an access arrangement). A pupil's use of a tablet device does not grant them provision to type as their normal way of working.

The School recognises that for some students with learning difficulties, disabilities or medical conditions, a laptop may be the most appropriate method of working for some or all written tasks so as not to put that student at a substantial disadvantage.

For students to be allowed to use a laptop:

- A need must be established, either through recommendation in an educational psychology report, medical report or similar, or through referral to and assessment by the school's learning support department. In some cases, need is demonstrated during the admissions process e.g. information from the previous school.

This may include where a candidate has, for example:

- 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
- Typing must be the normal way of working for the student in the subjects in which they wish to type for their exams. The school is required to keep ongoing evidence that this is the case and therefore all students using a laptop in lessons and for exams are required to participate in the learning support monitoring programme.

Laptops used in class need to be provided by students and parents must make sure they are appropriately insured. In exams, laptops will be provided by the school in order to comply with exam procedures.

Where a student has an educational psychology report that has been written since they joined the school, it is important that the assessment is carried out in collaboration with the school.

Where a student is referred to the learning support by a teacher, the referral will need to be accompanied by examples of work that can be kept as part of a file of evidence should a laptop be granted. A member of the department will review the work and decide if a handwriting assessment is appropriate and if so, arrange for this to be carried out. Following the assessment, they will contact parents to advise them of the school's recommendation. If a laptop is recommended, the student will be responsible for making sure it is suitably charged and looked after in school. They will also need to discuss arrangements for handing in and filing their work with their teachers.

Appendix:

Specifics relating to word processor use for examinations and assessments as required by the JCQ.

Principles for using a word processor

Merchant Taylors' School complies with AA section 4 regulations as follows:

(AA 4.2.1)

- Candidates with access to word processors 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 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 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 is agreed/processed at the start of the course or as soon as practicable having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working. Arrangements are always approved before examinations or assessments.
- Candidates are aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and controlled assessments/coursework.

(AA 4.2.5)

- 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 school tests and mock examinations

The use of a word processor

Merchant Taylors' School complies with AA section 5 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 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 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).

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in controlled assessments or coursework components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

(AA 5.8.3)

- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers.
- The school is 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, ensure that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and attached to each candidate's typed script.
- Ensures in Functional Skills English (Reading and Writing components) the use of a word processor with the spell check facility switched on is permitted for all candidates.
- 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.

Exceptions

The only exceptions to the above where the use of 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 (AA 4.2.4)
- where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the school provides word processors to all candidates (AA 5.8.4)

Word processors and their programmes

Merchant Taylor's School complies with ICE instructions by ensuring:

- 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
- 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 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
- 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 attached to 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 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 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

Merchant Taylor's School further complies with ICE 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
- each page is appropriately numbered.
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals
- it is possible to set up 'autosave' onto each laptop/tablet
- candidates granted the use of a word processor are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed off is their own.

Head of Learning Support

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To be reviewed November 2026