



HERSCHEL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Use of a Word Processor Policy

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Annually

Responsibility:

Full Governors Committee

Approved by full Governing Body

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***subject to any relevant changes in legislation or other appropriate guidelines**

Herschel Grammar School policy for the use of a word processor for Examinations

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Introduction

This policy on the use of word processors 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 2025–26 and Instructions for Conducting Examinations 2025–26.

Purpose of the policy

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

Principles for centres

Herschel Grammar School complies with AA chapter 4 Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties regulations and guidance as follows:

4.2.1 The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment 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.

A centre must make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they cannot make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

4.2.2 Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

4.2.3 Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. SENCos must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis.

4.2.4 Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course. Schools, for example, should be able to process applications at the start of or during the first year of a two-year GCSE course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working during Years 7 to 9. Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment.

4.2.5 The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre, for example:

- in the classroom (where appropriate);
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- support lessons;
- intervention strategies;

- in internal tests/examinations;
- mock examinations;
- consistent use of a word processor due to persistent and significant difficulties with handwriting, written expression, or speed of writing which impact legibility and fluency;
- regular need to edit, re-draft or organise extended writing using a word processor.

The use of a word processor

Herschel Grammar School complies with AA chapter 5 Access arrangements available as follows:

5.8.1 Centres are allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text switched off where it is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. For example, the candidate's quality of language significantly improves when using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand. (This also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets.)

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

5.8.3 A candidate may use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e., those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers.

NB 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 as the candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and computer screen.

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she wants to type rather than write, can work faster on a keyboard, or uses a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. A word processor must not be granted solely to improve grades, for convenience, or because the candidate prefers typing. The use of a standard word processor with spelling and grammar check and predictive text disabled does not require an application through Access arrangements online. The centre will retain evidence of need and normal way of working

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A Word Processor:

- must be used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;
- must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used. Only centre-provided cleared media may be used; candidates' own devices are not permitted;
- when needed, the centre must provide a memory stick, which is cleared of any previously stored data, to the candidate;
- must be in good working order at the time of the examination;

- must be accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. Screens should be positioned, and privacy filters used if required, to prevent visibility from others.
- where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated in another room, a separate invigilator will be required;
- must either be connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. Printing must occur under secure conditions and the candidate must be present to verify the work; printed scripts must be attached to any answer booklet containing handwritten responses.
- must be used to produce work under secure conditions; otherwise, the candidate's script may not be accepted;
- must not be used to perform skills which are being assessed;
- must not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited), email, the Internet, social media, or spreadsheets;
- must not include graphic packages or computer-aided design software unless permission has been granted;
- must not have any predictive text software or automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits it;
- must not include computer reading (text-to-speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader;
- must not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed);
- must not include any artificial intelligence tools or features that generate, suggest, or correct content beyond basic formatting functions;
- must not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe (a scribe cover sheet must be completed);
- a completed JCQ Word Processor Cover Sheet will be attached where required by the awarding body even if only part of the script is typed.

Advice:

Candidates should use a minimum of 12pt font (e.g., Arial or Times New Roman) and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking.

Record Keeping & Monitoring

The ANCo will maintain all records relating to word processor access arrangements, including specialist reports, classroom evidence, mock examinations and JCQ cover sheets. Records will be securely stored and retained in line with JCQ requirements for inspection (a minimum of 12 months after the last relevant examination series). Temporary arrangements will include clearly documented start and end dates. Compliance with this policy will be reviewed annually by the ANCo and Exams Officer, and any issues addressed promptly to ensure ongoing adherence to JCQ regulations.