SWC

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Examinations Word Processing Policy

Policy Owner: Head of Quality and Student Engagement

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1.0 <u>Introduction</u>

1.1 This policy is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of updated JCQ regulations.

1.2 References in this policy to AARA and ICE relate to/are directly taken from the JCQ publications **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for conducting examinations.**

1.3 The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement/reasonable adjustment.

1.4 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 as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

1.5 The following principles are applied to access arrangements at South West College:

   i.) 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 as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

   ii.) 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 AA Co-ordinator/SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations. (AARA 4.2.1)

   iii.) Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they are not granted where they will compromise the

assessment objectives of the specification in question. (AARA 4.2.2).

iv.) 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. AA Co-ordinator/SENCo must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by-subject basis. (AARA 4.2.3).

v.) AA Co-ordinator/SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage a candidate. (AARA 4.2.1).

vi.) The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments before his/her first examination. (AARA 4.2.7)

2.0 Policy Purpose

2.1   This policy details how South West College complies with AARA, chapter 4 (Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres), section 5.8 (Word processor) and ICE, sections 14.20-27 Word processors (computers, laptops and tablets) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of a word processor in examinations.

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

2.3   The criteria South West College uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

2.4   The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams unless there are exceptions.

3.0   <u>Exceptions</u>

3.1   A candidate may be awarded the use of a word processor in examinations where the candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

3.2   The candidate has a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way of working and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates.

3.3   South West College will:

- Allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AARA 5.8.1).
- Award the use of a word processor to candidates where appropriate to their needs (AARA 5.8.4). For example, a candidate with:
    - a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to write legibly;
    - a medical condition;
    - a physical disability;
    - a sensory impairment;
    - planning and organisational problems when writing by hand; or
    - poor handwriting.

    (This list is not exhaustive)

- Only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AARA 4.2.1).
- Not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AARA 4.2.2).
- Consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification (AARA 4.2.3).
- Process access arrangements/reasonable adjustments at the start of the course, or as soon as practicable having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working, ensuring arrangements are always approved before an examination or assessment (AARA 4.2.4).

- Provide the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AARA 5.8.2).

3.4   South West College will not simply grant the use of a word processor 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 (AARA 5.8.4).

3.5   Additionally, the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate 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 (AARA 4.2.4) where the curriculum is delivered electronically, and the centre provides word processors to all candidates (AARA 5.8.4).

4.0   Arrangements at the time of the assessment for the use of word processor

4.1   A candidate using a word processor is accommodated as follows:

4.1.1   The examinations officer will ensure they have requested a laptop from the IT department, fully compliant with only exam software. This laptop will be set up in the central hall near to a plug socket to ensure no power supply interruptions. Some examinations may be scheduled for use in a computer room, an exam login will be supplied to ensure the computer is locked down with no access to internet or software.

4.1.2   In compliance with the regulations, South West College:
- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20).
- Where a candidate is to be seated with the main cohort without the use of a power point, checks 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 (ICE 14.21).

- Ensures the candidate is reminded to ensure that the centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer e.g. 12345/8001 – 6391/01 (ICE 14.22).
- If a candidate is using a software application that does not allow for the insertion of a header or footer, once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off their typed script, they will be instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer; the candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that the candidate is solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way (ICE 14.22).
- Ensures the candidate understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23).
- Ensures the candidate is reminded to save his/her work at regular intervals (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet to ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost) (ICE 14.24).
- Instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing to make marking easier for examiners (ICE 14.24).

4.2   South West College will ensure the word processor (ICE 14.25):
- Is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions.
- Is not used to perform skills which are being assessed.
- 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 standard formatting software is acceptable.
- Is cleared of any previously stored data.
- Does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), e-mail, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets.
- 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.

- Does not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader.
- Does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software.
- Does not include AI Tools
- Is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

5.0 Portable storage medium

5.1   South West College will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used is provided by the centre and is cleared of any previously stored data.

6.0 Printing the script after the examination has ended

6.1   South West College will ensure (ICE 14.25):
- 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
- the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is his/her own
- a word processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- where an awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet, this is included with the candidate's typed script (and according to the relevant awarding body's instructions) (ICE 14.26)
- if a candidate omits to insert the required header or footer, they will be instructed to handwrite the details as a header or footer; the candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way

(ICE 14.22).

6.2   South West College may retain electronic copies of word processed scripts as the electronic copy of a word processed script may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost. However, the centre would need to demonstrate to the awarding body that the file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body (ICE 14.27).
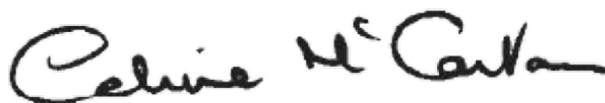
7.0   <u>Allocating word processors at the time of the assessment</u>

7.1   Students are responsible for paying exam fees. These are paid at the time of enrolment with the tuition fees.

7.2   Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be allocated by the IT department in liaison with the SENCo and the exams officer.

7.3   In exceptional circumstances where the number of compliant word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session the cohort will be split into two groups. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 7.2 of ICE.

8.0   <u>Promotion and Review</u>

8.1   The College will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this policy effectively and is committed to reviewing this policy annually.

Signed Principal and Chief Executive: _____

Date: 19.11.25

Signed Chair of the Governing Body: _____

Date: 19/11/2025

Related Documentation

Title	Location	Owner
JCQ General Regulations	https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/	Joint Council for Qualifications
JCQ ICE Booklet	https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations/	Joint Council for Qualifications
JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments	https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/	Joint Council for Qualifications

Change Log

Location	Change from deletion/addition	Change to
4.2	Addition:	Does not include AI Tools
All	AA	AARA

Communication

Who needs to know (for action)	All Curriculum Staff Exams Staff
Who needs to be aware	All Staff

Communication Plan

Action	By Whom	By When
Upload onto Gateway	Nicola Nugent	On approval and signing
Circulation to key staff	Exams Co-ordinator	On approval and signing

Document Development

Details of staff who were involved in the development of this policy:

Name	Role
Brian McIlduff	Head of Quality and Student Engagement
Lesley Black	Examinations Co-ordinator

Details of staff, external groups or external organisations who were consulted in the

development of this policy:

Name	Organisation	Date
Head of Quality and Student Engagement	SWC	26/09/2025
Exams Co-ordinator	SWC	26/09/2025
AA Co-ordinator/SENCo	SWC	N/A

Approval Dates

Approved by	Date
Governing Body	19 November 2025

Document History

Issue no. under review	Date of review:	Persons involved in review	Changes made after review. Yes/No If yes refer to change log	New Issue No.	If changes made was consultation required?	If changes made was Equality Screening required?
	New Policy					
V1.0	October 2024	Brian McIlduff Lesley Black	Addition of 1.5.2 some reformatting	V2.0	Na	na
V2.0	September 2025	Brian McIlduff Lesley Black	Minor	V3.0	No	No