



Word Processor Policy

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Version Control

The table below shows the history of the document and the changes that were made at each version:

Date agreed	Summary of changes
18 th March 2026	Updated AARA guidelines and footnote in section 1.; updated examples in section 3., clarified specific requirements in section 4., updated deadlines in section 5., changed references to 2025-26 ICE guidance and clarified requirement for AI and Word-processed scripts in section 7.
2 nd February 2023	Updated AARA references to 2022-23 and added clarifications on names etc throughout; updated section 5 and 7.
3 rd December 2021	N/A

1. Use of JCQ Guidelines

Hampstead School follows the current Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidelines on providing word processors in exams. Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) 2025-2026 states:

“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.”¹

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually, in line with current JCQ regulations and guidance on AARA and Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE).

2. Requirement for Evidence & History of Need

- word processors are not routinely provided for examinations, unless the test itself is computer-based and/or online, such as the Diploma in Digital Applications (DiDA)
- the school requires a proven history of need for individual students to use word processors in class outside of online exams and ICT lessons, whether for extended writing or as part of their routine. This history of need is then carried forward as evidence for their use in exams.

3. Reasons for Use of Word Processor in Class & for Exams

The following are examples of reasons why a candidate may be granted the use of a word processor. For example, a candidate 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.

This list is not exhaustive.

It is not permitted to grant use of word processor for exams to a student simply because they type faster than they write in exams, or because they use a laptop/word processor at home.

4. Formatting Issues

Word processed examination papers require specific formatting. Students who are approved to use a word processor must be familiar with the required formatting (e.g. font size, line spacing, page numbering). Opportunities to practise using a word processor will be provided during internal assessments and Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs).

¹ <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2026/03/JCQ-AARA-2025-March-26.pdf>, Section 5.81

5. Responsibilities of Staff in Communicating with Students

It is unhelpful to suggest to students, particularly close to scheduled examinations, that they may perform better with a word processor or any other access arrangement for exams, when such measures have not already been authorised.

By the time they sit public examinations, students should have had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with a settled format and routine for taking their exam.

If any student requires modified papers for the June 2026 series of exams, the final deadline was 31st January 2026. The final deadline for other access applications for the June 2026 series of exams was 31st January 2026.

6. Sudden Injury or Illness

Temporary permission for use of a word processor may be allowed if there is injury or late diagnosis of a condition which has made use of a word processor necessary.

7. Arrangements at the Time of the Assessment for the Use of a Word Processor

This section refers to Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE 2025-6).

A candidate using a word processor will be accommodated in the room used by other students requiring access arrangements or in a smaller room where this is a proven access requirement for the individual student. Students are not allowed to use their own personal laptop but will have a laptop provided for exams and practise exams (PPEs), as required.

In compliance with the current regulations, Hampstead School:

- 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 that their centre number, candidate number and the unit or component code should appear on each page as a header or footer: e.g. 12345/8001 – 6391/01 (ICE 14.22) 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 his/her typed script, they are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer. The candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that he/she is solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way
- 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 by invigilators to save his/her work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet)
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12 point type font and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking (ICE 14.24)

Hampstead School will ensure the word processor (see ICE 14.25):

- is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- is cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used. An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate. When needed, the centre must provide a memory stick, which is cleared of any previously stored data, to the candidate;
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- is used in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. Where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated in another room, a separate invigilator is required
- is connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium; this must be done after the examination is over. The candidate will and must be present to verify that the work printed is his or her own. Word processed scripts will be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the student's answers
- will be used to produce scripts under secure conditions, otherwise they will be refused
- will not be used to perform skills which are being assessed
- will not be connected to any intranet or other means of communication
- will not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), email, the internet, social media, spreadsheets
- will not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these
- will 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
- will not permit computer reading or text to speech software unless the candidate has permission to have a reader/computer reader
- will not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- will not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.
- must not include Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools

Some awarding bodies will require a cover note to be attached to a word-processed script.

Hampstead School may keep an electronic copy of a word processed script. This has to be stored securely and could be accepted by an awarding body if the original printed copy is lost. If this occurs the head of centre will write a cover letter to confirm the secure storage of the electronic copy.

Centres may retain electronic copies of word-processed scripts. 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 electronic file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body.

8. Approval of Arrangement

Decisions regarding the use of a word processor will normally be made by the SENDCo and Examinations Officer, based on evidence of the student's normal way of working.

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and available on request from the Administration Office.

This policy was last reviewed by the Head on 18th March 2026. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. It is due to be reviewed again in the academic year 2026-27.