



WELLINGTON COLLEGE BELFAST

Use of Laptops in Written Examinations Policy

Context

Students with access needs may require the use of a laptop when completing external examinations. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) require schools to adopt their policy for standard application of this access arrangement.

Principles guiding this policy

1.1 The use of a laptop in an exam needs to reflect a candidate's normal way of working in Wellington College and must be appropriate to the candidate's needs. The candidate must be proficient in the use of a laptop.

A laptop cannot be granted to a candidate solely because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can write faster on a keyboard.

1.2 Candidates who might benefit from such an arrangement can, for example, include those with

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to write legibly;
- a medical condition;
- a physical disability;
- a sensory impairment;
- illegible handwriting;
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand.

1.3 The use of a laptop will be considered when

- a need has been established;
- its use is recommended by the pupil's teachers and supported by evidence.

1.4 The SENCO and Exams access coordinator need to be satisfied that

- the use of a laptop is a required access arrangement
- a candidate's typing is efficient, accurate and of sufficient speed to be able to cope with the exams
- a candidate has used a laptop as their normal way of working in class and during school exams

1.5 Where the above requirements are not met, the use of a laptop will not be recommended.

1.6 In exams without a significant amount of writing or consisting of more simplistic answers which may be easier to handwrite, avoiding the need to switch between answer paper and a laptop may be preferable for the candidate.

The use of a laptop might not be agreed in cases where, for example

- a particular exercise should not be done with computer assistance (maps, diagrams etc.)
- calculations are required without the assistance of computer functions, such as in maths
- using a laptop would cause distraction or disturbance to other candidates.

Procedures

2.1 The access coordinator ensures that during mock exams, the way in which the laptop is used takes into account the relevant exam regulations.

2.2 The SENCO and Access coordinator periodically review the agreed arrangements and make adjustments as and when necessary.

2.3 Where, at a later stage, teachers or support staff identify an, as yet, unrecorded need for the use of a laptop as a pupil's normal way of working, they ensure that this is referred to the SENCO and Access coordinator for assessment and records will be updated as required.

Regulations for the use of a laptop (or other word processing device)

3.1 Wellington College will provide a laptop on the day of the exam to ensure that only standard software is accessible.

3.2 Only the relevant software applications will be available; spell-check, grammar check and the thesaurus will not be available. It will not be connected to the intranet, internet or any other means of communication.

3.3 For the production of text, only "Notepad" (or "Wordpad" or an equivalent) will be allowed – no spell-check, grammar check or thesaurus.

3.4 A device with a log in for each candidate will be provided by the Wellington College IT technician.

At the end of each exam the candidate will press print and remain with an invigilator to authenticate the relevant hard copy.

3.5 At all times, Wellington College will follow Exam Boards and JCQ exam regulations.