

**Grant recipient:** Dr Mellissa Prunty

**Grant:** Research Priority Grant 2019

**Title of project:** Writing in the Digital Age – Keyboard versus Pen in Adolescents with Handwriting Difficulties

### Abstract

Up to 90% of referrals to Children's Occupational Therapy (OT) are for difficulties with handwriting and as part of the OT process, alternative modes ie keyboarding are often recommended. In secondary school, these recommendations inform access arrangements where students can apply to use a word-processor in examinations. However, no study has examined whether a word-processor has a positive impact on *writing* (composition) performance, compared to writing by hand. In addition, little is known about the contextual environment (policies/practices) and how key-stakeholders (students/OTs/educators) experience the process of handwriting accommodations. This mixed-methods project (n=100) will use the Person-Environment-Occupation model as a framework to:

1. Quantify the impact of writing modality (keyboarding versus handwriting) on writing performance (occupation)
2. Measure factors that predict writing performance (person)
3. Obtain the views of key-stakeholders to understand local policies/practices (environment)

The project will create a much-needed evidence-base for supporting secondary school students with handwriting difficulties.