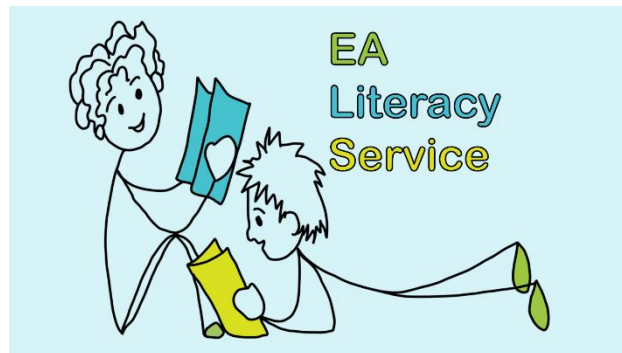


# EA Literacy Service

## JCQ access arrangements 2022/2023 for pupils with literacy difficulties

### Information & Updates



*This document has been developed by the EA Literacy Service (Northern Ireland). The information provided has been collated from the JCQ website with additional examples and interpretations provided by the Literacy Service. It is intended for parents/carers/staff who may be supporting a child or young person with literacy difficulties. The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the access arrangements approved by the JCQ for external examinations, for pupils with literacy difficulties. We hope you find some of the content helpful and informative – however please be aware that ultimately the school is responsible for ensuring the integrity of examinations.*

*The EA Literacy Service Team,*

*Sept 2022*

**“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be.”**

Education Authority – Literacy Service

## Contents

Access Arrangements.....	3
Arrangements not requiring an Access Arrangements Online application .....	7
Supervised Rest Breaks .....	7
Word Processor.....	7
Coloured Overlays.....	7
Coloured/Enlarged papers .....	8
Summary of JCQ access arrangements: 2021/2022 updates for pupils with literacy difficulties .....	9
5.2 25% Extra Time.....	9
5.5 Computer reader/reader .....	12
5.7 Scribe/speech recognition technology .....	19
Additional Information on Electronic Reader Pens .....	21
Advantages of an Electronic Reader Pen .....	22

Please Note: The information provided in this document is both based upon and in parts drawn directly from the 2022/23 edition of the JCQ’s publication, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments. Centres should ensure they follow and use the most up-to-date guidelines, proformas and templates when determining eligibility and/or applying for pupils’ access arrangements. The JCQ publish annual updates with regards to access arrangements. The vast majority of GCSE and GCE level qualifications in Northern Ireland are under the regulation of the JCQ.

“SENCOs may wish to consider the use of technology to a much greater extent instead of readers and scribes. Computer readers, examination reading pens, speech recognition technology and word processors not only allow candidates to work independently but are also a better preparation for Further and Higher Education and the world of employment”.

(JCQ, 2020, p.4) Available from: [Important supplementary information for SENCOs and assessors.](#)

**“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be.”**  
 Education Authority – Literacy Service

In this document you will find a summary of the key points relating to access arrangements that may be relevant for pupils with literacy difficulties. The information that follows is both based upon and in parts drawn directly from the 2022/23 edition of the JCQ’s annually updated publication, *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*. For more information please visit the JCQ website to download the 2022/2023 edition of [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#). You can also [subscribe to regular e-newsletters & bulletins](#) from the JCQ.

## Access Arrangements

Schools, colleges, universities and awarding bodies are legally required to make access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

NDCS, 2021

Please visit the JCQ’s [Access Arrangements Online](#) portal or scan the QR code below for additional information on how to submit access arrangements applications and order modified papers quickly and efficiently.



Access arrangements are not automatically permitted by exam boards – a school or college will need to show that they were part of a ‘normal way of working’ for a student.

NCDS, 2021

Applications for access arrangements should be made in good time before the examination date to ensure time for processing. Deadlines for submitting applications for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and orders for modified papers using Access Arrangements Online can be found on pages 5-6 of the [JCQ Guidelines](#). Centres should also refer to Chapter 8 for more detailed information on processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments.

N.B. much of the information that follows is drawn directly from the 2021/22 edition of the JCQ's publication, [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) and the chapter numbers are clearly visible for reference purposes.

**4.2.4 Access arrangements 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 Key Stage 3 (NI Years 8 to 10).

However, 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, access arrangements should be applied for as soon as is practicable. Centres **must** process applications as per **Chapter 8, section 8.3** using [Access Arrangements Online](#) where required.

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
- ❖ Literacy support lessons
- ❖ Literacy intervention strategies
- ❖ In internal school tests/examinations
- ❖ Mock examinations

**This is commonly referred to as ‘normal way of working’.** For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded within Part 1 of Form 8 by the SENCo or the assessor working within the centre.

SENcos and assessors **must** refer to **Chapter 7, paragraph 7.6.1** for information on how to confirm ‘normal way of working’. The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place due to a temporary injury or impairment (**see section 8.3**).

**4.2.6** As subjects vary, leading to different demands of the candidate, support may be needed in just one or two subjects; another candidate may need support in all their subjects.

The key principle is that the SENCo, or the assessor working within the centre, **can show a history of support and provision**. The arrangement is not suddenly being granted to the candidate at the time of their examinations.

**4.2.7** The SENCo and/or the assessor **must** work with teaching staff, support staff and exams office personnel to ensure that approved access arrangements are put in place for **internal school tests, mock examinations and external examinations**.

The candidate **must have had appropriate opportunities to practise** using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination. **This is particularly so where a computer reader, modified enlarged papers, a scribe, speech recognition technology or a word processor will be used in examinations.**

**4.2.8** If a candidate has **never** made use of the arrangement granted to him/her, e.g. 25% extra time or supervised rest breaks, then it is **not** their normal way of working. The **SENCo** may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage. (The SENCo would have monitored the use of the arrangement in internal school tests and mock examinations).

A **Form 8 (2021-2022 version)** is a template document produced by the JCQ that schools must complete as part of the application for Extra Time and/or a Scribe, for pupils experiencing literacy difficulties. Please note however that pupils experiencing literacy

difficulties who are subject to a Statement of Special Educational Needs do **not** require a Form 8 completing.

A Form 8 has three parts – Part 1 and Part 2 can be completed by a SENCo (no formal qualifications necessary) and whilst Part 3 can also be completed by a SENCo, in addition to their teaching qualification the SENCo must have:

“...successfully completed a postgraduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment”.

**JCQ, 2021, p.82**

Below is a list of the most commonly provided Access Arrangements for post-primary pupils experiencing literacy difficulties

- ❖ Supervised rest breaks
- ❖ Word processor
- ❖ Coloured overlays
- ❖ Coloured/enlarged papers
- ❖ Extra time
- ❖ Computer reader
- ❖ Reader
- ❖ Examination reading pen
- ❖ Scribe
- ❖ Speech recognition technology

## Arrangements not requiring an Access Arrangements Online application

### Supervised Rest Breaks

The SENCo **must** always consider if supervised rest breaks would be more appropriate before making an application for 25% extra time. There is no maximum time set for supervised rest breaks. The decision must be made by the SENCo based on their knowledge of the candidate's needs and the candidate's normal way of working when placed under timed conditions.

**For GCSE and GCE qualifications** the SENCo **must** produce a short concise file note on centre headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the need for supervised rest breaks to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. This **must** confirm the nature of the candidate's impairment and that supervised rest breaks reflect their normal way of working within the centre. Centres are advised to **see section 5.1** of the JCQ Guidelines for more detailed stipulations.

### Word Processor

Centres are allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text **disabled** (switched off) to a candidate where it is their **normal way of working within the centre**. There is not a requirement to process an application for a word processor using Access Arrangements online. No evidence is needed to support the arrangement for inspection purposes. (This also applies where a candidate is using a word processor on a temporary basis because of a temporary injury.) **However, centres must have a policy on the use of word processor and an awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet.** Centres are advised to **see section 5.8** of the JCQ Guidelines for more detailed stipulations.

### Coloured Overlays

The provision of a coloured overlay – including “reading rulers, virtual overlays and virtual reading rulers” – could prove a useful Access Arrangement for certain pupils experiencing literacy difficulties. There is no requirement to process an application to use coloured

overlays using Access Arrangements Online and no evidence is needed to support this Access Arrangement for inspection purposes. Centres are advised to **see section 5.16** of the 2021/2022 edition of the JCQ's annually updated publication, [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#), for more detailed guidance.

### **Coloured/Enlarged papers**

The centre is permitted to open the question paper packet **in the secure room** within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the examination. Prior permission is not required.

However, **it is strongly recommended** that a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper is ordered, as printing directly from a PDF of the question paper will ensure better print quality and reduce the possibility of human error when collating and stapling.

#### **Only the following actions are permissible:**

- ❖ copy and enlarge the standard paper from A4 to A3; **and/or**
- ❖ copy a question paper onto coloured paper; **and/or**
- ❖ produce a question paper with single sided print

Centres are advised to **see section 6.5** of the JCQ Guidelines for more detailed stipulations.

The following Access Arrangements **will** require an application submitting via the [Access Arrangements Online portal](#):

- ❖ Extra time
- ❖ Computer reader/Human reader
- ❖ Scribe/Speech recognition technology



## Summary of JCQ access arrangements: 2021/2022 updates for pupils with literacy difficulties

### Recent Updates:

The 2021/2022 updated sections are:

[5.6.4](#)

[5.7.2](#)

N.B. Clicking on the above links will take you directly to the relevant section within this document.

### 5.2 25% Extra Time

**5.2.2** In order to award 25% extra time the SENCo **must** determine the needs of the candidate based on one of the following:

- ❖ a **current** Education, Health and Care Plan **or** a Statement of Special Educational Needs (Northern Ireland), which confirms the candidate's disability (**supplemented by the required centre-based evidence** - see paragraph 5.2.3)

**or**

- ❖ a fully completed Form 8 with an assessment (Part 2 of Form 8) carried out **no earlier than the start of Year 10** (NI) by an assessor confirming a learning difficulty relating to secondary/further education (Form 8 **must** be **supplemented by a detailed picture of need** - see page 35 of JCQ Guidelines)

### Substantial impairment

So as not to give an unfair advantage, Part 2 of Form 8 **must** confirm that the candidate has at least:

**"To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be."**

Education Authority – Literacy Service

- ❖ two below average standardised scores of 84 or less; **or**
- ❖ one below average standardised score of 84 or less **and** one low average standardised score (85-89)

In either scenario, the two standardised scores **must** relate to two different areas of speed of working as below:

- ❖ speed of reading **and** speed of writing; **or**
- ❖ speed of reading **and** cognitive processing; **or**
- ❖ speed of writing **and** cognitive processing; **or**
- ❖ **two different areas** of cognitive processing which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on speed of working

An assessment of mathematical processing may be used as one of the two required measures for 25% extra time in Mathematics examinations only. The mathematical processing score **must** be below average. An assessment of mathematical processing **cannot** contribute to the evidence for 25% extra time in examinations other than Mathematics.

See paragraphs 7.5.10 to 7.5.13 for further information on reading skills, writing skills and cognitive processing.

### **Exceptional circumstances**

Where the assessment confirms that the candidate has at least two low average standardised scores (85-89) which relate to two different areas of speed of working, an online referral to an awarding body using Access arrangements online will be required.

### **Rare and very exceptional circumstances**

Where the assessment confirms that the candidate has a cluster of scores (at least three, relating to three different areas of speed of working) just within the average range (90 to 94), an online referral to an awarding body using Access arrangements online will be required.

**“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be.”**  
Education Authority – Literacy Service

The candidate **must** have a diagnostic assessment report, from **no earlier than Year 10 (NI)**, confirming a significant learning difficulty or disability which has a clear, measurable and substantial long-term adverse effect on performance and speed of working. This **must** have been undertaken by a specialist assessor.

For those rare and exceptional cases which fall outside the standard expected categories, as above, the amount of evidence of need will vary, and be greater, according to the candidate's standardised scores on tests of speed.

An awarding body reserves the right to request, 'call-in' evidence from the centre and will expect to see a strong justification for 25% extra time.

## **Factors the centre must consider**

**5.2.4** Where 25% extra time is to be made available to a candidate in their examinations, the centre **must** ensure that appropriate invigilation and timetabling arrangements are in place.

**5.2.5** Extra time **will not** be permitted in examinations testing the time in which a skill is performed, such as expressive arts, a musical performance, or a sport, where timing is an explicit part of the assessment objective.

**5.2.6** **Candidates may not require extra time for every examination/assessment and every subject.** As subjects and the methods of assessment vary, so the demands on the candidate will vary.

Extra time **may not** be appropriate in:

- ❖ practical examinations; or
- ❖ non-examination assessments where the impairment has a minimal effect on the assessment.

Care **must** be taken within the centre to ensure that candidates (whose normal way of working is to use extra time) are not placed at a disadvantage.

**"To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be."**  
Education Authority – Literacy Service

**5.2.7** For recorded examinations, the centre **must** request an extra recording from the awarding body, unless they normally receive enough spares.

Where a candidate has an approved application for 25% extra time, advice should always be sought from the relevant awarding body as to how the extra time is to be applied in a Listening examination.

Please remember, that for the overwhelming majority of candidates with literacy difficulties, 25% extra time will be sufficient. The amount of extra time requested must be both reasonable and appropriate to the candidate's needs.

Centres should see section **5.3** of the JCQ's annually updated publication, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, for guidance regarding determining a pupil's eligibility to extra time of up to 50% (between 26% and 50% extra time) **or** section **5.4** for extra time of over 50%.

Where a candidate requires a scribe with 25% extra time in **all** their examinations, centres **must** refer to paragraph 5.7.9 of the JCQ Guidelines.

## **5.5 Computer reader/reader**

For a candidate with a disability or a learning difficulty, a computer reader may allow them to demonstrate their attainment more effectively and independently than would be possible with a reader. However, a computer reader must be appropriate to the candidate's needs. There **must** be sufficient time and training to ensure the candidate is able to use a computer reader effectively.

### **A computer reader**

**5.5.2** Computer software which accurately reads out text, (including synthetic speech software stored on a memory stick) but **does not** decode or interpret the paper, may be used as a computer reader.

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the computer used **does not** contain any software that the candidate can access and which might assist him/her with the examination. **Failure to do so may constitute malpractice.**

**A computer reader will be allowed in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading.**

In cases where a computer reader is unable to recognise and thus read an individual word, a human reader may read out the word to the candidate.

Where an application for a computer reader is approved, the centre is permitted to open the question paper packet **in the secure room** within 90 minutes of the awarding body's published starting time for the examination. This is specifically to scan the hard copy question paper into PDF format. **Any infringement has the potential to constitute malpractice.**

However, where an application for a computer reader is approved, it is strongly recommended that the centre orders a non-interactive electronic question paper (see Chapter 6, section 6.7).

## **A reader**

**5.5.5** The SENCo must produce a short concise file note on centre headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the use of a computer reader and/or a human reader reflects their normal and current way of working within the centre.

For candidates with learning difficulties, assessment evidence and Form 8 is **not** required.

**A computer reader/human reader will be awarded on account of:**

- ❖ cognition and learning needs
- ❖ communication and interaction needs
- ❖ a medical condition
- ❖ sensory and physical needs
- ❖ social, emotional and mental health needs

**"To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be."**

Education Authority – Literacy Service

## Entry Level Certificate (ELC) qualifications

For Entry Level Certificate qualifications, the SENCo must determine the need for a computer reader and/or a human reader based on how the candidate normally works in the classroom.

In Entry Level Certificate English, a human reader **is not** permitted in the Reading component. **A computer reader may be used in the Reading component of Entry Level Certificate English where its use reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.**

For example, a year 11 pupil has been using a computer reader within class and at home to complete work and internal exams. The school can apply to use a computer reader to help him understand the questions and information in an examination paper as this is his normal way of working. The computer reader will be allowed to read all sections within the Entry Level Certificate English exam paper whereas a human reader would not be permitted.

A candidate who would normally be eligible for a reader, but **is not** permitted this arrangement, may be granted up to a maximum of 50% extra time.

The need for 25% extra time alongside the use of a computer reader/human reader should **always** be considered. If the candidate requires 25% extra time, then they **must** meet the published criteria for 25% extra time. The required evidence **must** be in place to support an online application.

For example, a candidate who normally has a human reader for examinations, cannot have the human reader in the **Reading component** of their Entry Level Certificate English exam and instead may be **awarded up to a maximum of 50% extra time.**

## Papers (or sections of papers) testing reading

### 5.5.6 A computer reader will be allowed in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading.

**A computer reader and a human reader do not interpret text in the same way.** A reader can add a layer of vocal interpretation (nuance and meaning). This could affect a candidate's response and therefore compromise the reliability of the qualification. A computer reader is an acceptable arrangement since it allows the candidate to independently meet the requirements of the reading standards.

For example, a candidate who normally has a human reader for examinations, cannot have the human reader in the **Reading component** of their English exam and instead may be **awarded up to a maximum of 50% extra time.**

Please note that in a paper testing reading a human reader can only read the instructions of the exam paper i.e. the rubric of the exam paper. **Questions and supplementary text, cannot be read to the candidate.**

### 5.5.7 A human reader **will not** be allowed to read questions or text in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading.

A candidate who would normally be eligible for a human reader but is not permitted this arrangement in a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading may be granted up to a maximum of 50% extra time. (Where a candidate is using a computer reader or an examination reading pen, the SENCo **cannot** grant up to a maximum of 50% extra time.)

An approved application for a human reader will allow the SENCo to grant the candidate up to a maximum of 50% extra time in a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading. Where reading and writing are being assessed in the same paper, the maximum allowance of 50% extra time **must only** be allocated to the reading section.

**“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be.”**

Education Authority – Literacy Service

Centres should calculate the total time allocated to reading based on the number of marks allocated to the reading questions and add up to a maximum of 50% to that time. Advice from the relevant awarding body may need to be sought.

In a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading a reader may read back, upon request, what the candidate has written without any emphasis on errors.

For example, in a AQA sample paper 1 GCSE English Language where Section A (reading) worth 40 marks and suggested time allocation is 1 hour and Section B (writing) worth 40 marks and suggested time allocation is 45 mins, a candidate can be awarded up to a maximum of 50% extra time on **Section A only**. Therefore, the allocation time for Section A would be 1 hr 30 mins in total, followed by the 45 mins for Section B.

Please see page 47-48 of the 2021/2022 edition of the JCQ’s annually updated publication, [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) for the permissions tables that provide guidance regarding the use of readers and computer readers in GCSE and A Level qualifications. Screenshots of these permissions tables can be found below.

COMPUTER READER/READER

**Permissions table for the use of readers and computer readers in GCSE and GCE qualifications**

Qualification	Current position		Rationale for current position
	Candidate must read for him/herself	Reader allowed	
<b>GCSE English Language</b>	Yes, in the section of a paper that assesses reading	Yes, except in the section of a paper that assesses reading	GCSE English Language assessment objectives show that learners must actually ‘read’ and demonstrate understanding of the written language. This requires taking meaning off the page from text or Braille. A reader would <b>not</b> be permitted for components that assess reading.  <b>NB</b> A candidate may however use a computer reader in the section of the paper that assesses reading. A computer reader allows the candidate to independently meet the requirements of the reading standards.
<b>GCSE English Literature</b>	No	Yes	Reading is not being assessed in GCSE English Literature. A reader or a computer reader would be permitted.

**“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be.”**

Education Authority – Literacy Service



COMPUTER READER/READER

**Permissions table for the use of readers and computer readers in GCSE and GCE qualifications**

Qualification	Current position		Rationale for current position
	Candidate must read for him/herself	Reader allowed	
A level English Language	No	Yes	For A level English Language, 'reading' is essentially a requirement to understand the text. A reader or a computer reader would be permitted to support the candidate in understanding the text.
A level English Literature	No	Yes	The candidate's response to literature and texts is being assessed rather than reading. A reader or a computer reader would be permitted to support the candidate in understanding the text.
A level English Language and Literature	No	Yes	The same position holds as for A level English Language and A level English Literature. A reader or a computer reader would be permitted to support the candidate in understanding the text.

A level MFL specifications	Yes, in MFL Reading papers	Yes, except in MFL Reading papers	<p>The assessment objectives show that learners must actually 'understand and respond, in speech and writing, to written language', (A02). This requires taking meaning off the page from text or Braille. Using a reader to read the English Language rubric is acceptable. However, using a reader to read the respective Modern Foreign Language would <b>not</b> be permitted as this would turn the task into a listening one.</p> <p><b>NB</b> A candidate may however use a computer reader in a MFL Reading paper. A computer reader allows the candidate to independently meet the requirements of the reading standards.</p>
----------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

## 5.6 Read aloud and/or the use of an examination reading pen\*

\*There is **not** a requirement to process an application for read aloud and/or the use of an examination reading pen using [Access Arrangements Online](#). No evidence is needed to support the arrangement for inspection purposes.

N.B. Read aloud is where the candidate is permitted to read the text out loud to themselves.

**"To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be."**

Education Authority – Literacy Service

## Read aloud

**5.6.1** It can make a significant difference to a candidate who **persistently** struggles to understand what they have read to read aloud. Where a candidate is reading difficult text, they may work more effectively if they can hear themselves read.

**5.6.2** The arrangement **must** reflect the candidate's **normal way of working** in internal school tests and mock examinations.

**5.6.3** A candidate who reads aloud to himself/herself **must** be accommodated in another room, away from the main examination room.

### 2021 – 2022 Update

**5.6.4** A candidate who would normally be eligible for a human reader but is not permitted this arrangement in a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading, may read aloud with up to a maximum of 50% extra time.

For example, during KS3 subject teachers report that a pupil understands the question paper better if they read out loud to themselves. Therefore, in KS4 the school can facilitate this pupil in a separate room (so as not to distract others) to speak aloud throughout their external examinations.

This arrangement would also be permitted for a pupil who would normally have a human reader but is not permitted due to a reading component within the paper. Up to a maximum of 50% extra time may be awarded for this candidate (upon application).

## Examination reading pen

**5.6.5** A permitted examination reading pen **will not** have an in-built dictionary or thesaurus, or a data storage facility.

The use of an examination reading pen, **provided by the centre**, might benefit those candidates who wish to work independently. **It may increase the independence of candidates who needed a reader for accuracy rather than comprehension.**

The use of an examination reading pen might also benefit those candidates who only require **occasional words or phrases** to be read to them.

An examination reading pen may be used in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading. However, the candidate **cannot** additionally be granted up to a maximum of 50% extra time in place of the reader.

Example – examination reading pen: A candidate was found to be mildly dyslexic in Year 8 (NI). The candidate has always used a reader in internal school tests. However, the SENCo trials the use of an examination reading pen which subsequently becomes her **normal way of working within the centre**. It is an effective arrangement, appropriate to her needs.

## 5.7 Scribe/speech recognition technology

**5.7.1** For those qualifications listed within the Deadlines section, an application for a scribe or speech recognition technology **must** be processed using [Access Arrangements Online](#). Appropriate evidence of need **must** be available at the centre for inspection.

If a word processor (with the spelling and grammar check disabled) is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, then it should be used in examinations to encourage independent working and access to marks awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar (see section 5.8).

A scribe **must only** be used where a candidate is not sufficiently competent or confident in using a word processor with the spelling and grammar check or predictive text facility disabled (switched off).

Some candidates will be able to use a word processor in most of their subjects but may require a scribe in subjects such as Maths and Science.

## A scribe

**5.7.2** A scribe is a responsible adult who, in non-examination assessments and/or in an examination but not in a Speaking Test, writes or types a candidate's dictated answers to the questions (see p53-p55 of the JCQ Guidelines for further stipulations).

If a candidate dictates answers on to a tape, a responsible adult **must** write down or word process the candidate's dictated answers to the questions.

### 2021 – 2022 Update

**5.7.2** The candidate **must be present** when the scribe writes or types their dictated answers.

## Use of speech recognition technology

**5.7.4** Where the centre has approval for the use of a scribe and where it reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, as appropriate to their needs, the candidate may alternatively use:

- ❖ a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility enabled; (**N.B.** This arrangement **will not** be permitted in ELC, GCSE and GCE Modern Foreign Language specifications. See page 53 of JCQ Guidelines; paragraph 5.7.6.)
- ❖ a word processor with predictive text/spelling and grammar check facility enabled; (**N.B.** This arrangement **will not** be permitted in ELC, GCSE and GCE Modern Foreign Language specifications. See page 53 of JCQ Guidelines; paragraph 5.7.6.)
- ❖ speech recognition technology with predictive text when the candidate dictates into a word processor. Software (a screen reader) may be used to read back and correct the candidate's dictated answers; (**N.B.** This arrangement **will not** be permitted in ELC, GCSE and GCE Modern Foreign Language specifications. See page 53 of JCQ Guidelines; paragraph 5.7.6.)
- ❖ computer software, producing speech, which is used to dictate to a scribe.

**"To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be."**

Education Authority – Literacy Service

However, the candidate **will not** have access to marks awarded for spelling, punctuation and/or grammar unless they have independently dictated spelling, punctuation and/or grammar, and this has been recorded on the scribe cover sheet.

If the candidate is using speech recognition technology which automatically spells words correctly, including grammar, then the candidate would not have access to marks assessing Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar.

In all cases a scribe cover sheet **must** be completed.

**So as not to give an unfair advantage, a scribe will only be allowed where:**

- ❖ an impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the candidate's writing; or
- ❖ a candidate cannot write, type or Braille independently, or at sufficient speed to record their answers even with extra time allowed, because of a substantial and long-term impairment.

The use of a scribe **must** reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre in the light of their substantial and long-term impairment.

N.B. Many candidates who produce inaccurate spellings, write legibly as they make reasonable phonetic approximations of the word in question, which can be read by the examiner. These candidates are unlikely to need the help of a scribe unless they have other substantial and long-term writing difficulties.

## Additional Information on Electronic Reader Pens

An Electronic Reader Pen is a handheld digital device that can read aloud text on a page, e.g. from an examination paper or a textbook. There are many different types of pens available, produced by a range of different companies. Some pens have built-in dictionaries and other useful features. Some pens are designed primarily for use in tests/examinations. Using OCR

**"To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be."**

Education Authority – Literacy Service

(Optical Character Reader) technology, these pens can scan and read printed text aloud and display it on a screen.

## Advantages of an Electronic Reader Pen

- ❖ Promotes independence
- ❖ Helps those with neuro-diverse needs – where human support is more a barrier than help
- ❖ Supports EAL (English as an Additional Language) learners
- ❖ Settings can be personalised e.g. reading speed
- ❖ Provides dictionary definitions to aid understanding
- ❖ Scans key words or phrases and transfers to a document for notes and revision
- ❖ Record/Dictaphone feature can be used for voice memos and reminders
- ❖ Works with headphones to facilitate inclusion in the classroom and exam hall
- ❖ Some Electronic Reader Pens are permitted by the JCQ to be used in examinations
- ❖ Increases a pupil's confidence and self-esteem.
- ❖ Bypasses a pupil's reading difficulties by reading aloud content on a page for them.

Some Electronic Reader Pens are classified as **Examination Reading Pens** – these **do not** have access to a dictionary, thesaurus, spell-checker and/or any other software or aid. The JCQ currently use the term “Examination Reading Pen” whilst a number of manufacturers use the slightly different term “Examination Reader Pen”. The two terms are in fact interchangeable.

Some reading pens have an Exam Lock feature (pin code activated) which aim to protect the integrity of examinations by prohibiting the access to some features (for example the dictionary, thesaurus, spell-checker and data storage). **It should be noted however that these pens are not JCQ approved and should only be used in informal school examinations/tests.**

Examination Reading Pens that are approved by the JCQ for use in GCSE, GCE, AS and A Level examinations are clearly labelled.

Section [5.6.5](#) in this document provides statements from the JCQ which are taken from the 2021/2022 edition of their annually updated publication, [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) which should prove useful for anyone keen to learn more about deploying Examination Reading Pens for post-primary pupils with literacy difficulties. Also provided is an example of a situation where an Examination Reading Pen could prove a useful access arrangement for a post-primary pupil.

Finally, the following should be noted with regards to Examination Reading Pens:

“There is not a requirement to process an application for the use of an examination reading pen using Access Arrangements Online. No evidence is needed to support the arrangement for inspection purposes”.

(JCQ, 2021, p.49)