

## 6.6 REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION IN ASSESSMENT

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## 1. Principles of Assessment in relation to Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment

Assessment is underpinned by the **principles of assessment** including the ***fair*** principle (equal opportunity for all learners) and ***consistent*** principle (consistency in approach to assessment across ETBs, programmes and modules). As such, in order to ensure the fair and consistent assessment of learners, the following procedure should be followed in relation to the provision of reasonable accommodation in assessment. Additionally, the principles of assessment include the ***valid*** principle (assessment measures what it is required to measure therefore ensuring the standard is achieved) and the ***reliable*** principle (accuracy and consistency with which an assessment measures the skill or attainment it is designed to measure). Kerry ETB's Quality Assurance System overarches these principles and ensures learner achievement is assessed in a fair and consistent way in line with the national standards for the award.

In order to ensure *fairness* and *consistency* across all assessment activities, learners can apply for reasonable accommodation in relation to their assessment while at the same time ensuring that the assessment remains *valid* and *reliable*.

**Special assessment arrangements/adaptations are not intended to and should not reduce the validity and reliability of the assessment or compromise the standard. The adaptation should seek to amend the aspects of the assessment technique or instrument which prevent a learner's participation in the assessment. It should be used where the particular assessment technique(s) or instruments disadvantage the learner in assessment. In essence, reasonable accommodations are put in place to facilitate the learner in demonstrating their knowledge, skill and competence to the standard required by the award. Making/providing reasonable accommodation is NOT intended to make the assessment easier or more achievable. In implementing reasonable accommodations the learner should neither be advantaged or disadvantaged. The required standard MUST still be achieved and demonstrated, albeit in a slightly different way.**

**Kerry ETB supports universal design principles in Assessment.**

## 2. Definitions

### 2.1. Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment

The Equal Status Act 2000 requires education and training establishments to provide reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of a learner who has a disability (Section 4: Discrimination on Ground of Disability).

**In the context of assessment, reasonable accommodation is the term for the adaptation of assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the assessment would otherwise be unfair, e.g. learners with a disability, and/or other learners covered by equality legislation. The grounds include: learning difficulty; deaf or having a hearing impairment; blind or visually impaired; physical difficulty (including mental health and/or behavioural difficulties along with physical difficulties); and any grounds covered by current legislation.**

**Reasonable accommodation guidelines for other awarding bodies supersede guidelines in this document.**

**Any adaptation of the assessment should facilitate the learner to demonstrate his/her achievement of the standards without altering the standard.**

**Special assessment arrangements/adaptations are not intended to and should not reduce the validity and reliability of the assessment or compromise the standard.**

Reasonable Accommodation in assessment will only be accommodated when a learner can demonstrate with appropriate evidence/documentation that because of a specific need he/she cannot compete on equal terms, under standard assessment conditions, with his/her peers.

Adaptations of assessment for a learner may be implemented by the provider without having to request permission from QQI. Other awarding bodies may have different requirements and in such cases the provider must adhere to the specific awarding body guidelines.

The adaptations may include the following and/or other reasonable adaptation:

- modified presentation of assignments/examination papers, e.g. enlargements
- scribes/readers
- sign language interpreter
- rest breaks
- adaptive equipment/software
- use of assistive technology
- additional time
- separate room/space

The implementation of these adaptations will ensure that all learners are assessed on an equitable basis. Kerry ETB is responsible for their implementation and any associated costs incurred.

## 2.2.Relevant Evidence/Documentation for Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment

Examples of relevant evidence/documentation necessary for application for reasonable accommodation in assessment include but are not limited to:

- Medical Report
- Educational Psychologist Report
- Occupational Therapist Report
- Guidance Counsellor Report<sup>i1</sup>
- Report of Kerry ETB staff trained by DAI using ART 2 and DAST
- Kerry ETB specialist staff report

Examples of relevant evidence/documentation which **do not qualify for application** for reasonable accommodation in assessment application include:

- English is not the first language of the learner
- Literacy ability
- Injuries/disabilities that do not have an impact on the learner's ability to demonstrate the required standard of knowledge skill and competence (see section 3.3)

### 3. Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Roles and Responsibilities

#### 3.1. The Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator

The Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator must coordinate and assess the application for Reasonable Accommodation. The Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator must also inform the learner of the outcome of his/her application. If an application is successful, the Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator must work with the Teacher/Tutor/Instructor (and other relevant persons if required) to accommodate the learner while **strictly adhering** to the assessment principles above and the standard of knowledge, skill and competence required for certification.

#### 3.2. The Teacher/Tutor/Instructor

Once an application for Reasonable Accommodation is approved, the Teacher/Tutor/Instructor together with the Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator (and other relevant persons if required) are required to plan and implement an alternative/adapted assessment in order to accommodate the learner while **strictly adhering** to the assessment principles above and to the standard of knowledge, skill and competence required for certification.

#### 3.3. The Learner

##### **Specific Needs**

The learner is required to inform the Centre by identifying themselves as persons with **specific needs** and requesting the provision of alternative assessments and/or other support services that best meet their needs following the commencement of the course (within six (6) weeks prior to the assessment event). This may allow reasonable accommodation to be facilitated. This application must be in writing using the Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Application Form (see Appendix 1).

##### **Temporary Circumstances**

The learner is required to inform the Centre by identifying themselves, due to **temporary circumstances** (e.g. temporary injury), as persons requesting the provision of alternative/adapted assessments and/or other support services that best meet their needs as soon as possible. This may allow reasonable accommodation to be facilitated. This application must be in writing using the Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Application Form (see Appendix 1).

The learner is required to submit relevant evidence/documentation (see 2.2).

## 4. Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Procedure

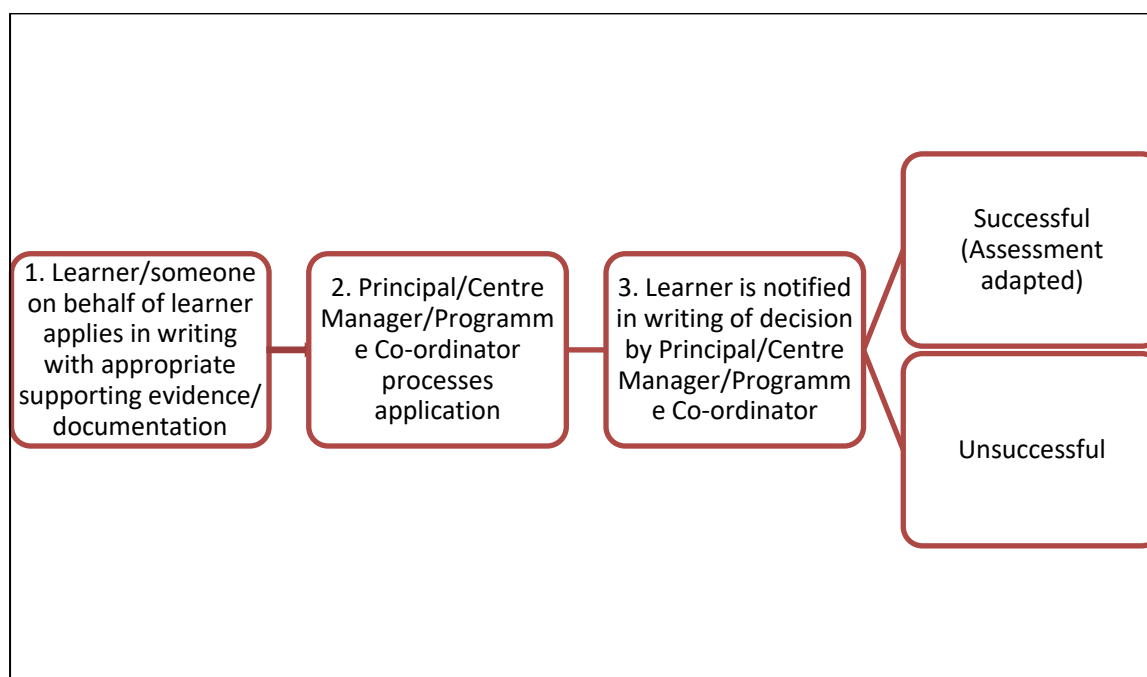


Figure 1.1 Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Procedure

1. The learner (or someone on behalf of the learner) applies in writing for reasonable accommodation in assessment to the Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator, using the **Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Application Form** (see Appendix 1).

<b>Specific Needs:</b>	The application must be complete prior to the course commencement well in advance of the assessment deadline (recommended six (6) weeks)
<b>Temporary Injury:</b>	The application must be complete as soon as possible

The application **MUST** be supported with **all** relevant evidence/documentation (see 2.2). A dialogue between the Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator and learner must take place in order to determine the needs of the learner and ways to support and facilitate the learner in the assessment process while adhering to the principles of assessment.

2. The Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator must decide whether there is sufficient evidence (see 2.2) to proceed with the application. Additional information may be sought through dialogue between the Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator & the learner.
3. The Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator informs the learner in writing of the decision.
  - **Successful:**

If the application is **successful** (i.e. there is sufficient evidence to proceed with the<sup>2</sup>application), the Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator will inform the learner of the outcome **within two (2) weeks from receipt of all evidence/documentation**. The Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator will work with the Teacher/Tutor/Instructor (and other relevant persons if required) to adapt the assessment while strictly adhering to the principles of assessment in relation to reasonable accommodation (see Appendix 2: Adaptations of Assessment).

- **Unsuccessful:**

If the application is **unsuccessful** (i.e. there is insufficient evidence to proceed with the application), the Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator will inform the learner. The learner may appeal this decision.

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<sup>2</sup>The Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator may designate the Training Standards Officer/Quality Assurance Officer to process applications where no financial cost is included.

## **5. Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Appeals**

The learner has the right to appeal the decision in relation to reasonable accommodation in assessment application decision. Appeals must be made within five (5) working days of the decision. (In exceptional circumstances, the Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator may extend this). All appeals must be made in writing using the relevant Appeals Application Form (see Appendix 3). The Appeals process is processed in line with ETB appeals procedures.

## Appendix 1: Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Application Form

<b>REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION IN ASSESSMENT APPLICATION FORM</b>	
This request must be completed at the start of the course and be submitted along with relevant evidence/documentation to the Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator for approval.	
<b>Part A:</b> <b>This section must be completed by the learner</b>	
Centre Name:	
Learner Name:	
Award/Course:	
Module(s):	
Teacher/Tutor/ Instructor(s):	
Assessment Techniques	Examination <input type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Skills Demonstration <input type="checkbox"/> Learner Record <input type="checkbox"/> Assignment <input type="checkbox"/> Collection of Work <input type="checkbox"/>
Details of reasonable accommodation being requested:	
Supporting relevant evidence/documentation included:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details of supporting relevant evidence/documentation:	
Learner Signature:	
Date:	

**Part B: (Office Use)****This section must be completed by the Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator**

Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator Name:	
Receipt date of application:	
➤ <i>Details of relevant evidence/documentation</i>	
Application:	Successful <input type="checkbox"/> Unsuccessful <input type="checkbox"/>
➤ <i>Adaptation of assessment details</i>	
Signature:	
Date:	

## REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION IN ASSESSMENT APPLICATION FORM

### Part C: (Office Use)

**This section must be completed by the Principal/Centre  
Manager/Programme Co-ordinator and returned to the learner**

*This section should accompany relevant assessment material when submitted.*

<b>Learner Name:</b>	
<b>Date of Decision:</b>	
<b>Outcome:</b>	Successful <input type="checkbox"/> Unsuccessful <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>If granted, details of assessment adaptation:</b>	

## Appendix 2: Adaptations of Assessment

### Individualisation

As a general rule, an adaptation to the form of delivery, which makes learning possible, will also assist in making assessment possible. The learner is usually the best authority on what form of delivery is the most effective and the same method(s) may then be possible during any assessment. However, **it is important that the standard of work required by the assessment is not diminished. Only the method(s) by which the learner demonstrates his/her attainment of the standard can be adjusted.**

### Rest Breaks

Supervised rest breaks either inside or outside the assessment area should be allowed as is appropriate. A rest break can be flexible according to individual needs, e.g. ten minutes every hour as opposed to one 20-minute period during a three-hour assessment. The time so used should not be deducted from the time allowed (where specified) to complete the assessment. Rest breaks should not exceed 20 minutes per examination.

### Split Sessions

Splitting the assessment into two or more sessions may be an appropriate alternative for some learners.

### Extra Time

In the case of assessments that are based on time, additional time of ten (10) minutes per hour, or part thereof, is allowed for learners with a visual impairment or learners where a scribe has been sanctioned; or learners who meet the eligibility criteria for the use of a recording device or a word processor but who are unable to make use of these aids under examination condition.

### Readers

A reader is a person provided to assist a learner with a disability by reading assessment questions aloud without suggesting the answer. A reader is a person who, on request, will read to the learner:

- a. The entire or any part of the assessment
- b. Any part of the learner's answers (exactly, as they are 'spoken')

Readers are typically used by people with visual impairments, people who tire easily, people who have extreme muscle weakness and people with learning difficulties.

Only one reader per learner is permissible and the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel.

### Writers/Scribes

A writer is a person who will, on request, write the answers exactly as given or dictated by a learner. A writer may also act as a reader and is often used in similar circumstances to a reader. As in the case of a reader, only one writer per learner is permissible and the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel.

### **Sign Language Interpreters**

Sign Language Interpreters must be qualified to interpret Sign or other similar types of language. Only one Sign Language Interpreter per learner should be used. The assessment for learners (usually those who are deaf or hard of hearing) should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel.

For extra transparency it may be necessary to video-tape the assessment for translation later. Similarly, some learners may prefer to sign their answers directly to video. A signed response should be transcribed to print by someone proficient in sign language. Any words or phrases re-interpreted for the learner should be underlined and noted in the question paper.

### **Computers**

The use of computers by learners with a disability may be necessary as their primary means of communication, e.g. for learners with physical impairments for whom writing is difficult, for learners with visual impairments or blindness and for learners with learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

The definition of a 'computer' generally refers to hardware and/or software which facilitate effective communication for people for whom this may not otherwise be possible. It may be standard equipment, e.g. the use of word-processing software by someone with motor difficulties which impede handwriting or may be specially adapted, e.g. speech synthesisers and text enlargement software/hardware for people with visual impairments.

Where voice-activated software is used, the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel. It is the responsibility of the assessment/training location to supply the appropriate hardware/software.

### **Audio-recording**

Audio-recording assessments and responses are useful in some cases, e.g. visual impairment or motor difficulties. The centre should supply the assessment tape and a blank tape to learners at the same time as other learners. However, in order to minimise disruption to learners, the person should either use headphones or complete their assessment in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel.

### **Braille, Braille-mate, Braille 'n speak, Braille 'n print, etc.**

Braille is generally, though not extensively, used by learners who are blind or visually impaired. It is generally advised that the Braille machine is attached and adapted to a printer which will produce a printed text. The responses of the learner should not be printed until after the end of the assessment time, as the noise levels may be too high for other learners. The assessment/training location should supply the printer, braille paper and/or the computer print-out paper.

### **The Use of Technology**

There are technological aids that magnifies print. They are usually used for learners with visual impairments. The learner can read the assessment paper as well as his/her answers from a screen.

### **Enlarged Print to A3 size**

Some learners, usually those with visual impairments, may simply require their assessment papers in enlarged print, i.e. A3 size paper.

### **Examination Papers in Colour**

Some learners, especially those who have dyslexia, may require their assessment paper in a colour other than black and white - for example, black on yellow, or black on grey. A gloss/high-sheen coated paper may also be unsuitable. The learners themselves should be consulted.

### **Other Technologies**

The whole area of new technologies and access to information is rapidly changing. The opportunities for learners to demonstrate their abilities are increasing with the advent of assistive devices like the 'true-type talking microphone', a device which with practice can type onto a computer screen a person's spoken word. Such technologies are also becoming more accessible in terms of general availability and price.

### **Separate Room**

Many learners experience recognised mental health illness at the time of examinations, such as stress, insomnia, and anxiety. Learners should be able to access a separate room from the examination hall/skills demonstration room, via extra time/space/supervision, to ensure that the learner is not disadvantaged by their mental health condition.

## APPEALS APPLICATION FORM (Reasonable Accommodation)

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### Appendix 3: Appeals Application Form (Reasonable Accommodation)

<b>Part A: This section must be completed by the Learner</b>	
<b>Centre Name:</b>	
<b>Learner Name:</b>	
<b>Date of Application:</b>	
<b>Reason for Appeal:</b>	
<b>Reason why decision was declined:</b>	
<b>Details of supporting evidence provided:</b>	
<b>Date of Application:</b>	

## APPEALS APPLICATION FORM (Reasonable Accommodation)

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**Part B: (Office Use) This section must be completed by the relevant ETB Principal/Centre Manager/Programme Co-ordinator**

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Receipt date of application:</b>	
<b>Application:</b>	I can confirm that a review of the Application has been completed and that the Appeal is: Granted <input type="checkbox"/> Declined <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Reason:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

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## Appendix 4: Guidelines for the Use of Readers, Scribes and Computers in Examinations

### Duties of a Reader

1. The role of a reader in examinations is to read the examination instructions and questions only. It is not the role of the reader to explain or clarify.
2. The reader should be an independent person and not familiar to the student/ learner/ apprentice.
3. The reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate.
4. The reader may enable a visually impaired learner to identify diagrams, graphs and tables but must not give factual information nor offer any suggestions, other than that information which would be available on the paper for sighted learners.
5. The reader may read numbers printed in figures as words (e.g. 252 would be read as two hundred and fifty two but at the point of reading the number it should also be pointed to on the paper). An exception would be when the question is asking for a number to be written in words (e.g. Write the number 3675 in words.).
6. The reader must not decode symbols and unit abbreviations (e.g.  $2^2$  should not be read as two squared but the function simply pointed to by the reader since part of the assessment is recognising what the superscript 2 means. Similarly, if the symbol  $>$  is printed, it should not be read as 'greater than' but simply pointed to by the reader.).
7. The reader may read back, when requested, what has been written in the answer.
8. The reader should not provide content to the student/ learner/ apprentice or offer any suggestions.
9. The reader should not advise the student/ learner/ apprentice on which questions to attempt, when to move on the next question, or the order in which questions should be attempted.
10. Instructions given on the examination paper can only be repeated when the reader is specifically requested to do so by the student/ learner/ apprentice.
11. The reader should make no other comment or use any intonation which emphasises any part of the examination questions, nor make any interpretation of the examination question(s).

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12. The reader should not discuss any matter with the student/ learner/ apprentice during the examination unless it relates to the re-reading of an examination question (having been requested to do so by the student/ learner/ apprentice).
  13. Sometimes a student/ learner/ apprentice may require a reader and a scribe. In such instances the same person may act as both.
  14. In some instances the reader may also act as the invigilator for the examination e.g. where there is just one student/ learner/ apprentice. The reader should familiarise themselves with such duties.
  15. It is important that the reader abides by the guidelines since failure to do so could lead to the disqualification of the learner.

### **Duties of a Scribe**

- a. The scribe is required to produce an accurate record of the student/ learner/ apprentice's answers.
- b. The scribe should be an independent person and not familiar to the student/ learner/ apprentice.
- c. The scribe should be relaxed. This may help to alleviate any anxieties the student/ learner/ apprentice may have in relation to the examination.
- d. The scribe should arrive before the commencement of the examination, allowing sufficient time to establish a rapport with the student/ learner/ apprentice, to make seating arrangements and to agree guidelines for:
  - a. Presentation
  - b. Spelling
  - c. Punctuation
  - d. New paragraphs etc.
- e. The scribe must draw or add to maps, diagrams and graphs strictly in accordance with the student/ learner/ apprentice's instructions, unless the student/ learner/ apprentice is taking a design paper, in which case a scribe will only be permitted to assist with written parts of the paper.
- f. The scribe must immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the examination supervisor.
- g. The scribe must not give factual help to the student/ learner/ apprentice or indicate when the answer is complete.

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- h. The scribe must not advise the student/ learner/ apprentice on which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or on the order in which questions should be answered.
  - i. The scribe must not expect to write throughout the examination if supervised rest breaks have been permitted.
  - j. The scribe may, at the student/ learner/apprentice's request, read back what has been recorded.
  - k. Scribes should have proficient typing skills if typing a student/ learner/ apprentice's dictated answers, and should be capable of writing legibly at appropriate speed if writing a student/ learner/ apprentice's dictated answers.
  - l. The scribe should advise student/ learner/ apprentices as to the duration of the examination, the number of questions to be answered and any additional instructions.
  - m. It may be a requirement that the examination script is submitted in electronic format and that the examination material is recorded on an official computer located in the institution, not on a laptop belonging to the student/ learner/ apprentice or scribe.
  - n. If using a computer, the scribe should ensure the computer is set to automatically save work regularly (every 3 to 5 minutes). If using Microsoft Word, go to Tools/Options/Save and select the preferred time.
  - o. If the student/ learner/ apprentice needs a rest or toilet break the scribe should accompany them.
  - p. A student/ learner/ apprentice may elect to write sections of the paper themselves.
  - q. If the student/ learner/ apprentice writes notes, essay plans or illustrations, these should be included with the examination script. For example, the student/ learner/ apprentice might draw rough diagrams from which the scribe will draw a final version and include both copies with the examination script.
  - r. Additional time of ten minutes per hour or 25% extra time in theory exams and a separate venue will be provided when using a scribe.
  - s. The scribe must abide by the guidelines since failure to do so could lead to the disqualification of the learner.
  - t. It is important that the scribe abides by the guidelines since failure to do so could lead to the disqualification of the learner.
  - u. In some instances the scribe may also act as the reader or invigilator for the examination. The scribe should familiarise themselves with such duties.

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## **Using a Computer:**

A computer:

- i. Must only be used by a student/ learner/ apprentice who has applied and is approved for a reasonable accommodation e.g. presents handwritten communication that is illegible, incomprehensible or produced at below average speed.
- ii. Must be cleared of any previously stored data and learners cannot access remote/cloud stored information/files.
- iii. Must be in good working order at the time of the examination with access to the list of applications primarily within the Office 365 suite.
- iv. Must either be connected to a printer so that an answer paper can be printed off or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium<sup>i</sup>. This may be done after the examination is over, not in the extra time. The student/ learner/ apprentice should be present to verify that the work printed is his or her own. Word processed answer paper must be attached to any answer book which contains some of the answers.
- v. Must be connected to mains electricity.
- vi. Must be used to produce answer papers under secure conditions, otherwise they may be refused.
- vii. Must not give the student/ learner/ apprentice access to other applications such as calculators, spread sheets, remote/cloud storage etc.
- viii. Must not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these.
- ix. Voice-activated software/voice recognition software may not be used unless the student/ learner/ apprentice has permission to use a scribe or relevant software.
- x. Must not be used to perform skills which are being assessed.
- xi. Must not be connected to an Intranet or any other means of communication.

## **Technology as an alternative to a reader**

Student/ learner/ apprentices with disabilities who require specialist examination supports such as assistive technology, must attend training in the use of such accommodations. It is

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the student/ learner/ apprentice's responsibility to be proficient in the use of technology for examinations. Training is made available to the student/ learner/ apprentices during the academic year.

For example, The Read, Write, Gold software is solely to aid student/ learner/ apprentices to read the exam paper. If student/ learner/ apprentices want to word process their examination then he/she must have same granted by the College/ Centre/ Programme and must make an application.

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<sup>i</sup> Any portable storage medium used such as memory sticks must be cleared of any previously stored data and can be used by an examinations officer/ invigilator only to take the completed work to a printer.

<sup>i</sup> Read Write Gold is an assistance technology that assists students with their reading and writing.