Requirements for Students in an Exams Context

The student must have a **genuine need** for using a word processor, such as:

- Learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia)
- Physical disability or motor coordination difficulties
- Long-term medical conditions
- Handwriting difficulties (illegible or extremely slow)
- Psychological or emotional needs that affect handwriting
- Schools must **document** this as "normal way of working."

JCQ's technical requirements:

- **No access to internet or spell check**
- **Only blank software (e.g., Word or Notepad)** — no grammar or predictive tools
- **Printing must be possible immediately after the exam**
- **Each student's work must be identified by candidate number and exam details**

The word processor should be cleared of any content before the exam.

Students using a laptop in an Exams Context

Word Processing: - A laptop can be used as a word processor for typing out exam answers instead of writing by hand. This is particularly helpful for candidates with specific learning difficulties, physical disabilities, or medical conditions that make handwriting difficult.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

"A word processor will be allowed in examinations when it is appropriate to the candidate's needs." (section 5.8.1).

"The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre" (section 5.8.4).

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Students using voice-to-text in an Exams Context

Off the shelf Dictation Software

Read&Write (by Everway): A secure tool which offers exam-mode dictation and text-to-speech. Approved by JCQ when set as a normal way of working.

Dragon NaturallySpeaking (by Nuance Dragon): Offline speech-recognition software enabling fluent dictation without internet. Widely used in UK schools with SEN support and recommended by occupational therapists and approved by JCQ .

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Students using voice-to-text in an Exams Context

Offline Dictation in Windows Microsoft Voice Dictation is a built-in feature in Windows that allows users to convert spoken words into text.

When used offline, it enable speech-to-text functionality without needing and internet connection – which makes it ideal for use in exams.

1.Open settings
Press Windows + I to open the Settings app
Settings > Privacy & Security > Speech
Turn on **Windows Speech Recognition** or **Voice Typing**

2. Use Dictation
Press Windows + H to start **Voice Typing**

Students using voice-to-text in an Exams Context

OrbitNote

OrbitNote allows students to work in exam-safe modes to

- **Read PDFs aloud** using text-to-speech.
- **Highlight** and **annotate** text.
- **Can also be used to type or dictate answers** directly into a document.

OrbitNote is especially useful in s supporting students with **dyslexia**, **visual impairments**, or other **accessibility needs** to make paper-based content usable in a **digital format**.

Students using text-to-speech in an Exams Context

C-Pen Readers are portable devices that scan and read printed text aloud, helping students with reading difficulties during exams.

Advantages: They support independence and boost comprehension.

Disadvantages: They can be inaccurate, students find it tricky to keep on the line, they require training, and students need to practice regularly.

Scanmarker Reader Pens (Exam Version) are digital tools that scan and convert printed text into audio or digital formats. Faster to use than C-Pen, look 'cooler' and have AI built in to increase accuracy.

Advantages: Fast scanning, digital note-taking, and text-to-speech support. A special tool is provided to support stable hand control.

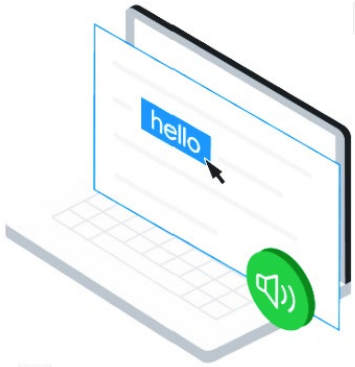**Disadvantages:** Some of the features (eg dictionary) aren't s exam-approved.

OrCam Learn is an advanced AI-powered reader that captures and reads printed or digital text aloud.

Advantages: Hands-free use, high accuracy, reads entire pages, and includes study tools. Easier to use for students with poor hand control.

Disadvantages: Expensive, and many features may not be allowed in exam settings.

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Students using text-to-speech in an Exams Context

Chromebook Electronic Reader

Chromebook's built-in **Select-to-Speak** feature. While limited, it works within Google Docs, No extension is needed, it works in Kiosk mode (if accessibility settings are enabled in managed device settings beforehand) and is simple and reliable.

How to Enable:

Go to **Settings > Accessibility** on the Chromebook.
Enable **Select-to-Speak**.
Students can then select text and press **Search + S** to have it read aloud.

Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word includes a built-in **Read Aloud** tool:

- **Open the Word document** (e.g., the exam paper in digital format).
- Go to the **Review** tab.
- Click **Read Aloud**.
- Highlight the text you want read aloud or just click play to begin.
  Note: This works **offline** and does not require internet.

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Students using literacy or typing support in an Exams Context

Everway Read&Write is a powerful literacy support tool that many CENMAC students use in exam mode to help them access assessments more independently and is fully compliant with JCQ Access Arrangements.

Here are the key features:

- **Exam Mode**: A secure, easy-to-use interface that locks down features to comply with JCQ regulations and can be activated easily by exams officers using a secret password.
- **Text-to-Speech**: Reads exam questions aloud with dual-colour highlighting to support focus and comprehension.
- **Dictation Tool**: Allows students to speak their answers, replacing the need for a human scribe.
- **Screenshot Reader**: Reads text embedded in images or diagrams—ideal for science and geography papers.
- **Vocabulary and Dictionary Tools**: Supports understanding of unfamiliar words with definitions and visual aids.

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Students using literacy or typing support in an Exams Context

WordQ is an assistive technology literacy support tool that many CENMAC students use in exam mode to help them access assessments more independently and is designed to support students with reading and writing challenges.

Here are the key features that make WordQ exam-ready:

- **Word Prediction**: Suggests words as the student types, reducing spelling errors and supporting vocabulary recall.
- **Text-to-Speech**: Reads text aloud, including exam questions and typed responses, to aid comprehension and proofreading.
- **Speech Recognition**: Allows students to dictate their answers, offering an alternative to typing or handwriting.
- **Proofreading Mode**: Helps students review their writing by reading it back and highlighting potential errors.
- **Topic Lexicons**: Custom word banks tailored to specific subjects (e.g. science or history) to improve prediction accuracy.

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