

# Computers and assistive technology

## Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA)

This information is for students, parents/carers, teachers and assessment supervisors. It applies to students undertaking summative assessment in Applied, Applied (Essential), General and General (Extension), including Alternative Sequences and General (Senior External Examination (SEE)) subjects, and Short Courses.

Students with a disability, impairment and/or other condition may access a computer and appropriate assistive technologies for their summative assessments, if these are usual adjustments required to enable them to complete assessment on the same basis as other students.

Use of a computer and use of assistive technology are separate AARA that the principal (or delegate) may approve individually or together for summative internal assessment. QCAA approval is required for their use in the common internal assessment (CIA) in Essential English and Essential Mathematics and in summative external assessment and the Senior External Examination.

## Submitting an application

Applications must be submitted in the AARA application (app) via the QCAA Portal for use of a computer to type a digital response, or use of a computer and assistive technology, as set out below.

Student needs	Computer	Assistive technology
to type their digital response	✓	
to use an assistive technology to produce their digital response (e.g. speech recognition)	✓	✓
to use an assistive technology to read on-screen text (e.g. screen reader)	✓	✓
to use an assistive technology to read paper test materials (e.g. scanning pen)		✓

## Assistive technology

The following assistive technology options may be selected within the AARA app. Schools must specify the specific assistive technology software and/or hardware applied for, in the mandatory free text field:

- access hardware (e.g. alternative keyboard, trackball, eye-gaze)
- magnifier
- refreshable braille device
- scanning pen (set to exam mode)
- screen reader. (Schools must specify if alt text is required to describe images for students with vision impairment. Non-alt text should be selected for all other students)
- speech recognition
- other.

# Using computers and assistive technology

When a student is approved use of a computer and/or assistive technology in summative assessment, the school must:

- disable grammar check, word prediction and dictionary functions (spell check may be enabled)
- provide a device, or approve use of the student's own device if required for accessibility
- ensure the device is plugged in or fully charged for the assessment
- remove subject-related files from the device
- ensure the student does not have access to the device immediately before the assessment event
- ensure the device does not have a connection to the internet or network (unless approved by the QCAA to enable particular accessibility software for individual students)
- actively supervise use of the computer and/or assistive technology throughout the assessment.

## External assessment and the CIA

For external assessment and the CIA, alternative format digital files are supplied by the QCAA through the fileShare app. These are in PDF format.

### Important information

Alternative format digital files **must** be opened in a **PDF reader**. Adobe Acrobat Reader is recommended. Schools must **not** open files in an internet browser as they may not save or function correctly.

Assistive technology, including screen readers and speech recognition software, must operate in the PDF environment. (Schools should contact the QCAA AARA Unit if there is a possibility that alternative arrangements may be required to enable the use of specialised accessibility software for individual students with disability).

For further information specific to external assessment, see the *Computers and assistive technology in external assessment* factsheet and the *Directions for administration: External assessment*.

## More information

- QCAA policies and processes
  - *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook*, Section 6  
[www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/certificates-and-qualifications/qce-qcia-handbook/6-aara](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/certificates-and-qualifications/qce-qcia-handbook/6-aara)
  - AARA factsheets, all available at [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/aara](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/aara)
  - phone 1300 381 575 or email [aara@qcaa.qld.edu.au](mailto:aara@qcaa.qld.edu.au). Please do not hesitate to contact us with any enquiries related to computers and assistive technology.



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