

The use of linguistic support in the assessment of Reading in National Qualifications in English

The aim of SQA's Assessment Arrangements policy is to make adjustments for disabled candidates when they are placed at a substantial disadvantage in relation to the published assessment arrangements.

Candidates, who are unable to read text independently in English because of a particular disability and who need to use some form of linguistic support (assistive technologies, including electronic screen readers) on an ongoing basis, may have such support in all of the assessment components in English including those assessing reading.

The key purpose or the rationale of the assessment objective of reading in National Qualifications in English is about the candidate's ability to demonstrate a range of interpretative and conceptual comprehension skills and is not simply the technical process of decoding hardcopy text.

For example, in Standard Grade qualifications in English pupils learn to read for a variety of purposes and in appropriate ways. The main purposes are to:

- ◆ gain overall impression/gist of a text
- ◆ obtain particular information from a text
- ◆ grasp ideas or feelings implied in a text
- ◆ evaluate the writer's attitudes, assumptions and argument
- ◆ appreciate the writer's craft
- ◆ enjoy and obtain enrichment from a text.

In Intermediate and Higher Courses in English pupils are required to

- ◆ demonstrate their ability to understand, analyse and evaluate passages of unseen prose
- and
- ◆ develop and extend a range of reading skills through studying, analysing and responding to a wide variety of informational, literary and media texts which convey ideas in appropriate language structures.

Using a reader is deemed to be a reasonable adjustment to make for the disabled candidate to allow them access to the assessment and is necessary to remove the significant disadvantage that the disabled candidate is under. SQA is satisfied that the level and rigor of the assessment is maintained and the award is not compromised.